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Lyra Christiana

A TREASURY OF
SACRED POETRY

EDITED BY H. L. L.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
London, Edinburgh, and New York
1888

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LYRA CHRISTIANA

A TREASURY OF SACRED POETRY

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

By H. L. L.

Author of "Hymns from the Land of Luther."

[Jane Borthwick ed.]

T. NELSON AND SONS,
London, Edinburgh, and New York.
1888.

Preface.

My aim as Editor of this volume has been, not to form a collection of Hymns, properly so called, but of Sacred Poetry. Without by any means excluding devotional poems, I have endeavoured to select, chiefly from modern sources, those which not merely breathe a spirit of piety, but also bear, either in ideas or expression, the stamp of poetic feeling and talent. Any person well acquainted with our English hymnology must be sensible how often these qualities are *not* combined, although the time-honoured stanzas will be ever dear to Christian hearts.

As to how far I have proved successful, I must leave my readers to judge. In this, as in all departments of literature, individual tastes and opinions differ; and doubtless almost every hymn-lover will think the "Lyra Christiana" imperfect, from missing some of his or her special favourites. Yet I hope such disappointment may be consoled by finding in these pages some new treasures, while the old favourites can be returned to elsewhere.

The arrangement for a year appeared to me to possess the advantage of being rather unusual, and also of giving opportunity for a variety of subjects in connection with the changing seasons.

I desire to return grateful thanks to those friendly writers and publishers who have kindly granted me permission to include their poems in my collection.

H. L. L.

EDINBURGH, *December 1887.*

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January 1.

THINGS NEW AND OLD.

"Ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new."—"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."—Lev. xxvi. 10; Rev. xxi. 5.

With the New Year the old, sure Refuge still,
  Our Father ruling on His throne above!
He guides the nations by His sovereign will,
  He bears His people on His wings of love.
Thy gracious care through all the past we see,
The unknown future we can leave with Thee!

With the New Year grant a new blessing, Lord!
  Still unexhausted is Thy bounteous hand;
Roses shall blossom, if Thou giv'st the word,
  And fountains murmur, in the desert land.
Thy blessing fills the basket and the store;
Give as Thou seest good—we ask no more.

With the New Year old burdens still of care—
  The year of jubilee is not yet come;

Still must we nerve our hearts, to do or bear,
  Pilgrims and strangers on the journey home.
Not here our rest—to trial yet and toil
We must go forward, through life's "little while."

With the New Year new hopes, for earth and heaven!
  Fair Nature's summer beauties shall return,
And to us also sunshine shall be given—
  Our Father's children do not always mourn;
New gifts of love Hope in the future sees,
And far beyond them "greater things than these."

With the New Year may the old faith remain!
  Rise, soldiers of the Cross, to fight once more!
Let the old standard be unfurled again—
"In this we conquer" now, as oft of yore!
Still the old battle-cry, the old broad shield—
Christ and His host again shall keep the field!

With the New Year renew our hearts, O God!
  Renew our strength, to run the heavenly way;
In the old paths, where all Thy saints have trod,
  O Saviour, lead us! help us, day by day,
Through storm or calm, our journey to pursue,
Till the bright morn when all shall be made new!

CARL GEROK.

January 2.

BATTLE HYMN FOR THE NEW YEAR.

"Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."—1 THESS. v. 8.

THE old year's long campaign is o'er,
Behold a new begun;
Not yet is closed the Holy War,
Nor yet the triumph won.
Out of his still and deep repose
We hear the old year say,—
"Go forth again to meet your foes,
Ye children of the day!

"Go forth! firm Faith on every heart,
Bright Hope on every helm,
Through that shall pierce no fiery dart,
And this no fear o'erwhelm!
Go in the Spirit and the might
Of Him who led the way;
Close with the legions of the night,
Ye children of the day!"

So forth we go to meet the strife,
We will not fear nor fly;
We love the holy warrior's life,
His death we hope to die!

We slumber not, that charge in view:
"Toil on while toil ye may,
Then night shall be no night to you,
Ye children of the day!"

Lord God, our Glory, Three in One,
Thine own sustain, defend!
And give, though dim this earthly sun,
Thy true light to the end;
Till morning tread the darkness down,
And night be swept away,
And infinite sweet triumph crown
Thy children of the day!

Rev. S. J. Stone.

* * *

January 3.

"DOE THE NEXTE THINGE."

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."
Eccles. ix. 10.

FROM an old English parsonage, down by the sea,
There came in the twilight a message to me;
Its quaint Saxon legend, deeply engraven,
Hath, as it seems to me, teaching for heaven,
And on through the hours, the quiet words ring,
Like a low inspiration,—"Doe the nexte thinge."

Many a questioning, many a fear,
Many a doubt, hath its quieting here;
Moment by moment, let down from heaven,
Time, opportunity, guidance are given.
Fear not to-morrows, child of the King!
Trust them with Jesus,—"Doe the nexte thinge."

Oh, He would have thee daily more free,
Knowing the might of thy royal degree;
Ever in waiting, glad for His call,
Tranquil in chastening, trusting through all.
Comings and goings no turmoil need bring;
His all thy future,—"Doe the nexte thinge."

Do it immediately, do it with prayer,
Do it reliantly, casting all care;
Do it with reverence, tracing His hand
Who hath placed it before thee with earnest command.
Stayed on Omnipotence, safe 'neath His wing,
Leave all resultings,—"Doe the nexte thinge."

Looking to Jesus, ever serener,
Working or suffering, be thy demeanour!
In the shade of His presence, the rest of His calm,
The light of His countenance, live out thy psalm.
Strong in His faithfulness, praise Him, and sing;
Then, as He beckons thee, "Doe the nexte thinge."

ELLIOTT.

January 4.

MOTTO FOR A NEW YEAR.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God."—"As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."—Ps. xl. 8; Eph. vi. 6.

I ASKED the New Year for some motto sweet,
Some rule of life by which to guide my feet;
I asked, and paused—reply came, soft and low:
"God's will to *know!*"

"Will knowledge then suffice, New Year?" I cried.
But ere the question into silence died,
The answer came: "Nay; this remember too,
God's will to *do!*"

Once more I asked, "Is there still more to tell?"
And once again the answer sweetly fell:
"Yes, this one thing all other things above,
God's will to *love!*"

Anon.

* * *

January 5.

"THE RIGHT WAY."

"And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."—Ps. cvii. 7.

'TIS not the way that lay so bright before me,
When youth stood flushed on Hope's enchanted ground,

No cloud in the blue sky then bending o'er me,
No desert spot in all the landscape round.

Fair visions, glimmering through the distance, beckoned
My buoyant steps along the sunny way,
Sweet voices thrilled me, till I fondly reckoned
That life would be one long, glad summer day.

This was the path my feet had gladly taken,
And, blindly lured by that deceitful gleam,
I would have wandered on, by God forsaken,
Till death awoke me from the fatal dream.

Alas ! in youth by Eden's gate we linger,
In its green bowers we fain would make abode,
Till the stern angel-warder, with calm finger,
Points the feet outward to the desert road !

My pleasant path in sudden darkness ended,
My footsteps slipped, my hopes were well-nigh gone ;
I could but pray, and as my prayer ascended,
Thy face, O Father, through the darkness shone.

And by that light I saw the cross of trial,
The landmark of the way my Saviour went,
The upward path of pain and self-denial,
And Thou didst point me to the steep ascent.

A way I knew not! winding, rough, and thorny,—
So dark at times that I no path might see;
But Thou hast been my Guide through all the journey,
Its steepness has but made me lean on Thee.

And onward still I go, in calm assurance
That Thou wilt needful help and guidance lend;
That strength will come for every day's endurance,
Grace all the way, and glory at the end.

J. D. Burns.

* * *

January 6.

THE MORNING STAR.

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."—"I Jesus am the bright and morning star."—"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."—Matt. ii. 10; Rev. xxii. 16; Luke ii. 32.

LIGHT of the lonely pilgrim's heart,
Star of the coming day!
Arise, and, with Thy morning beams,
Chase all our griefs away!

Come, blessed Lord, bid every shore
And answering island sing
The praises of Thy royal name,
And own Thee as their King.

Bid the whole earth, responsive now
  To the bright world above,
Break forth in rapturous strains of joy
  In memory of Thy love.

Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation groans,
  The air, the earth, the sea,
In unison with all our hearts,
  And calls aloud for Thee.

Come then, with all Thy quickening power,
  With one awakening smile,
And bid the serpent's trail no more
  Thy beauteous realms defile.

Thine was the cross, with all its fruits
  Of grace and peace divine;
Be Thine the crown of glory now,
  The palm of victory Thine!

Sir E. Denny.

* * *

January 7.

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD.

"Then spake Jesus, saying, I am the light of the world."
John viii. 12.

LIGHT for the dreary vales
  Of ice-bound Labrador!
Where the frost-king breathes on the slippery sails,
  And the mariner wakes no more;

Lift high the lamp that never fails
To that dark and sterile shore.

Light for the forest child!
An outcast though he be
From the haunts where the sun of his childhood smiled,
And the country of the free.
Pour the hope of heaven o'er his desert wild,
For what home on earth has he?

Light on the Hindu shed!
On the maddening idol-train!
The flame of the suttee is dire and red,
And the fakir faints with pain,
And the dying moan on their cheerless bed,
By the Ganges laved in vain.

Light for the Burman vales!
For the islands of the sea!
For the coast where the slave-ship fills its sails
With sighs of agony,
And her kidnapped babes the mother wails
'Neath the lone banana tree!

Light for the ancient race,
Exiled from Zion's rest!
Homeless they wander from place to place,
Benighted and oppressed;

They shudder at Sinai's fearful base,—
Guide them to Calvary's breast.

Light for the darkened earth!
Ye blessed, its beams who shed,
Shrink not, till the day-spring hath its birth,
Till, wherever the footstep of man doth tread,
Salvation's banner, spread boldly forth,
Shall gild the dream of the cradle bed,
And clear the tomb
From its lingering gloom,
For the aged to rest his weary head!

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

* * *

January 8.

GLAD TIDINGS.

"And the angel said, Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."—LUKE ii. 10.

WE asked an Indian brother,* a warrior of old,
How first among his people the Glad Tidings had been told?
How first the Morning Star arose on their long heathen night,
Till souls who "sat in darkness" were rejoicing in the light?

---

*John Tschcop, one of the first converts of the Moravian missionaries among the North American Indians.—See CRANTZ' *History*.

And he answered, "Many a summer has come and gone
since then,
Yet well I can remember—I can see it all again.

"A teacher came among us, from the country of your
birth,
And told us of the living God, who made the heaven
and earth ;—
But we asked if he had been a fool, or thought that we
were so ;
For who among our sons did *not* the one Great Spirit
know ?

"So he left us ;—and another told us much of sin and
shame,
And how for sinners was prepared a lake of quenchless
flame ;—
But we bade him teach these things at home, among
the pale-faced men,
And if *they* learned the lesson right, we too would
listen then.

"At last another stranger came, of calm and gentle
mien,
And eyes whose light seemed borrowed from yon blue
the clouds between ;
Still in my dreams I hear his voice, his smile I still can
see,
Though many a summer he has slept beneath the cedar
tree !

"He told us of a Mighty One, the Lord of earth and sky,
Who left His glory in the heavens for men to bleed and die;
Who loved poor Indian sinners still, and longed to gain their love,
And be their Saviour here, and in His Father's house above.

"And when his tale was ended—'My friends,' he gently said,
'I am weary with my journey, and would fain lay down my head;'
So beside our spears and arrows he laid him down to rest,
And slept as sweetly as the babe upon its mother's breast.

"Then we looked upon each other, and I whispered, 'This is new,—
Yes, we have heard glad tidings, and that sleeper knows them true!
He knows he has a Friend above, or would he slumber here,
With men of war around him, and the war-whoop in his ear?'

"So we told him, on the morrow, that he need not journey on,
But stay and tell us further of that loving, dying One.
And thus we heard of Jesus first, and felt the wondrous power
Which makes His people willing in His own accepted hour."

Thus spoke our Indian brother; and deeply, while we heard,
One cheering lesson seemed impressed, and taught by every word—
How hearts, whose echoes, silent long, no words of terror move,
May answer from their inmost depths to the soft call of *love*.

O mighty love of Jesus! what wonders thou hast wrought!
What victories thou yet shalt gain, surpassing human thought!
Let Faith and Hope speed forward unto earth's remotest bound,
Till every tribe and nation shall have heard the joyful sound!

H. L. L.

* * *

January 9.

THE ETERNAL WORK.

"Then came the first servant, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."—LUKE xix. 16, 17.

I LAY up treasure in the heavens;
My gold accumulates and grows;
I hoard, but not on earth; my wealth
Before me daily goes.

My hands, my lips, each power within,
  I fain would educate for heaven;
Here is the school where we are trained,
  And here the lessons given.

'Tis for eternity I read,
  And do, and think, and study here;
Purging and pruning every branch
  That it may fruitage bear.

What God hath given me, that I count
  Too precious and too great to lose;
And all I have I treasure up
  For everlasting use.

I work that I may fitted be
  For more than angel's work above,
When of this life's strange mystery
  The meaning I shall prove.

By earthly discipline and toil
  I sharpen these my blunted powers,
For nobler work awaiting them
  In vaster fields than ours.

I shall not die at death, nor shall
  My past of life all useless be:
These powers within me, lodged by God,
  Are for eternity;

And all this discipline of time—
The pain, the weariness, the strife—
Tells on my endless usefulness
In the unmeasured life.

A higher and more useful life
Above, shall mine for ever be;
And all that I have learned on earth
Shall then be used for Thee.

In higher service shall I then
These renovated powers employ;
Work without weariness be mine,
And everlasting joy.

DR. H. BONAR.
From "The Song of the New Creation."

* * *

January 10.

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."—ECCLES. xi. 1.

THE land was still, the skies were gray with weeping;
Into the soft brown earth the seed she cast.
"Oh, soon," she cried, "will come the time of reaping,
The golden time, when clouds and tears are past!"

Then came a whisper through the autumn haze,—
"Yea, thou shalt find it, after many days."

Hour after hour she marks the fitful gleaming
  Of sunlight, shining through the cloudy lift;
Hour after hour she lingers, idly dreaming,
  To see the rain fall and the dead leaves drift.
"Oh, for some small green signs of life!" she prays;
"Have I not watched and waited many days?"

At early morning, chilled and sad, she hearkens
  To stormy winds that through the poplars blow;
Far over hill and plain the heaven darkens,
  Her field is covered with a shroud of snow.
"Ah, Lord," she sighs, "are these Thy loving ways?"
He answers—"Spake I not of *many* days?"

The snowdrop blooms; the purple violet glistens
  On beds of moss, that take the sparkling showers;
Half-cheered, half-doubting yet, she strays and listens
  To finches singing to the shy young flowers.
A little longer still His love delays
The promised blessing—"after many days."

"Oh, happy world," she cries, "the sun is shining!
  Above the soil I see the springing green:
I could not trust His word without repining,
  I could not wait in peace for things unseen.
Forgive me, Lord! my soul is full of praise;
My doubting heart prolonged Thy 'many days.'"

J. L. Cotham.

January 11.

CHRIST THE HEALER.

"And he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."—MATT. viii. 16, 17.

THROUGH this sad world, where sin and death are stalking
On to dry places lower than the grave,
Oh, it is well there is a Healer walking
In majesty of mercy—strong to save!

He doth not silence the shrill voice of anguish
That crieth after Him in open street;
Nor pass unheeding by the couch where languish
The palsied forms that fain had sought His feet.

With crowds in temple, feast, and mart, He mingles;
Yet ofttimes, as at noon by the lone well,
One conscious, throbbing heart His love out-singles,
To bare its wound, and of the cure to tell.

A touch, a sigh, a look that yearns towards heaven,
A word of peace, a gently-thrilling call,
Tender anointings to the sightless given—
These heal His suppliants; and He heals them all.

Oh that there were a pressing and a thronging
Into the presence of the Saviour God!

Oh that earth's sorest need and sickest longing
  Might find its one true balm—His precious blood!……

All-pitying Christ! Thy heart with love is glowing,
  Drawn sympathetic to the souls that bleed;
Thy mercy to our misery is flowing—
  No charm for Thee, Lord, like the sinner's need.

Once in a city, when the sun was setting,
  At Thy blest feet they laid the sick all down;
And ere it sank, all pain and woe forgetting,
  A murmur of great joy rose through the town.

And one day shall the world with mirth be ringing,
  When from Thy glance its maladies are flown;
The song of joy and health exultant singing,
  When Thou hast healed its hurt and stilled its moan.

O Healer! hasten that sure day of gladness—
  The whole earth's hallelujah unto Thee!
Hear Faith's deep sighing 'neath these clouds of sadness
"When will the dawn break, and the shadows flee?"

A. R. Cousin.

* * *

January 12.

THE MEASURE OF THE CURE.

"Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you."—Matt. ix. 29.

OH, do not unto me, my Saviour, speak
  As once Thou saidst, before a cure was won,
"According to thy faith to thee be done."

Alas! my faith is all too weak,
Thy help by such a rule to seek.

Not as my faith, which is so faint and slow,
Lord, be Thy gift, or else the boon were small,
Or nought at times from Thee received at all.
According to Thy love bestow;
Nought can above that measure go!

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

January 13.

THE OLIVE TREE.

"Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."—LUKE xii. 30, 31.

SAID an ancient hermit, bending
Half in prayer upon his knee,
"Oil I need for midnight watching;
I desire an olive tree."

Then he took a tender sapling,
Planted it before his cave,
Spread his trembling hands above it
As his benison he gave.

"But," he thought, "the rain it needeth,
That the root may drink and swell:
God, I pray Thee, send Thy showers!"
So a gentle shower fell.

"Lord, I ask for beams of summer,
Cherishing this little child!"
Then the dripping clouds divided,
And the sun looked down and smiled.

"Send it frost to brace its tissues,
O my God!" the hermit cried.
Then the plant was bright and hoary,—
But at evensong it died.

Went the hermit to a brother
Sitting in his rocky cell:
"Thou an olive tree possessest;
How is this, my brother, tell?

"I have planted one, and prayed
Now for sunshine, now for rain;
God hath granted each petition,
Yet my olive tree hath slain!"

Said the other: "I intrusted
To its God my little tree;
He who made knew what it needed
Better than a man like me.

"Laid I on Him no conditions,
Fixed not ways and means—so I
Wonder not my olive thriveth
Whilst thy olive tree did die."

S. Baring-Gould.

January 14.

THE STARRY HEAVENS.

"And God said unto Abraham, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."—"And they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."—GEN. xv. 5; DAN. xii. 3.

MORE and more stars! and ever as I gaze
Brighter and brighter seen!
Whence come they, father? trace me out their ways
Far in the deep serene."—
My child, these eyes of mine but faintly show
One step on earth below;
And even our wisest may but dream, they say,
Of what is done on high, by yon empyreal ray.

* * * *

Yet surely of yon lamps on high we deem
As of pure worlds, whereon the floods of mercy stream.

Yea, in each keen heart-thrilling glance of theirs
Of other stars we read,
Stars out of sight, souls for whom Love prepares
A portion and a meed
In the supernal heavens for evermore,
When sun and moon are o'er;
Fixed in the deep of grace and song, as these
In the blue skies, and o'er the far-resounding seas.

More and more stars, here in our outward heaven!
More and more saints above!
But to the wistful gaze the sight is given,
The vision to meek love,—
Love taught of old to treasure and embalm
Whate'er in morning calm
Or evening soft steals from the gracious skies,
The dry ground freshening with the dews of Paradise.

* * * *

More and more stars! behold yon hazy arch
Spanning the vault on high,
By planets traversed in majestic march,
Seeming to earth's dull eye
A breath of gleaming air;—but take thou wing
Of faith, and upward spring—
Into a thousand stars the misty light
Will part; each star a world with its own day and night.

Not otherwise of yonder saintly host
Upon the glorious shore
Deem thou. God marks them all, not one is lost;
By name He counts them o'er.
Full many a soul, to man's dim praise unknown,
May on its glory-throne
As brightly shine, and prove as strong in prayer,
As theirs, whose separate beams shoot keenest through this air.

Keble, "*Lyra Innocentium.*"

January 15.

GUIDING STARS.

"Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—HEB. vi. 12.

JOY of my life while left me here,
And still my love!
How in thy absence thou dost steer
Me from above!
A life well led
This truth commends;
With quick or dead
It never ends.

Stars are of mighty use. The night
Is dark and long,—
The road foul, and where one goes right
Six may go wrong.
One twinkling ray,
Shot o'er some cloud,
May clear much way,
And guide a crowd.

God's saints are shining lights: who stays
Here long must pass
O'er dark hills, swift streams, and steep ways
As smooth as glass;
But these all night,
Like candles, shed

Their beams, and light
Us into bed.

They are indeed our pillar-fires,
Seen as we go;
They are that City's shining spires
We travel to.
A sword-like gleam
Kept man for sin
First *out;* this beam
Will guide him *in.*

HENRY VAUGHAN.

* * *

January 16.

HOPE AND MEMORY.

"I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more."—"Patience worketh experience; and experience, hope."—"Be sober, and hope to the end."—Ps. lxxi. 14; ROM. v. 4; 1 PETER i. 13.

TWO sisters are there—ever year by year
Companions true and dear
To meek and thoughtful hearts. Fair Hope is one,
With voice of merry tone,
With footstep light, and eye of sparkling glance.
The other is perchance
Even somewhat lovelier, but less full of glee;
Her name is Memory.

She wanders near me, chanting plaintive lays
Of bygone scenes and days;
And when I turn, and meet her thoughtful eye,
She tells me mournfully
Of soft, low gurgling brooks, and glistening flowers,
And childhood's sunny hours;
And then with tears and melancholy tone
She tells me they are gone.

Hope gently chides her—bids me not to cast
My eyes upon the past.
Cheering me thus, she leads me by the hand
To view her own fair land;
And soon I see where many pleasures meet,—
Some close before my feet,
And some, seen dimly through the distant haze,
Grow brighter as I gaze.

Oh! both refresh me. Yet not only so;
They teach—where'er I go.
One tells of follies past, and one is given
To talk to me of heaven.
And thus I'll cling to both. Soft Memory,
All pensive though she be,
Shall bide a comrade cherished to the end;
But Hope shall be my friend.

J. S. Howson.

January 17.

FOLLOWING IN DARKNESS.

"Jesus said unto him, Come, take up the cross, and follow me."
MARK x. 21.

THOU sayest, "Take up thy cross,
O man, and follow Me:"
The night is black, the feet are slack,
Yet we would follow Thee;

But oh, dear Lord, we cry,
That we Thy face could see!
Thy blessed face one moment's space—
Then might we follow Thee!

Dim tracts of time divide
Those golden days from me;
Thy voice comes strange o'er years of change:
How can I follow Thee?

Comes faint and far Thy voice
From vales of Galilee,—
Thy vision fades in ancient shades,
How should we follow Thee?

Unchanging law binds all,
And Nature all we see;
Thou art a star, far off, too far,
Too far to follow Thee!

Ah, sense-bound heart and blind!
  Is nought but what we see?
Can Time undo what once was true?
  Can we not follow Thee?

Is what *we* trace of law
  The whole of God's decree?
Does our brief span grasp Nature's plan,
  And bid not follow Thee?

O heavy cross—of faith
  In what we cannot see!
As once of yore, Thyself restore,
  And help to follow Thee!

If not as once Thou cam'st
  In true humanity,
Come yet as Guest within the breast
  That longs to follow Thee.

Within our heart of hearts
  In nearest nearness be;
Set up Thy throne within Thine own;—
  Go, Lord, we follow Thee!

F. T. Palgrave.

January 18.

OUR MASTER.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—"That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."—John xiv. 6; Eph. iii. 17–19.

IMMORTAL Love, for ever full,
For ever flowing free,
For ever shared, for ever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the Name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away!
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How far and wide we stray!......

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all,
Eternal Love, remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,

Who know with John His smile of love,
  With Peter His rebuke.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
  Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
  Of the oblivious years,—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
  A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
  And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
  Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
  And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
  Our lips of childhood frame;
The last low whispers of our dead
  Were burdened with His name.

O Lord and Master of us all!
  Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
  We test our lives by Thine.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
  In differing phrase we pray;

But, dim or clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render Thee
Is still our Father's own;
Nor jealous claim nor rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labour vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy cross
Is better than the sun.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord!
What may Thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee.

WHITTIER.

* * *

January 19.

ON A DARK WINTER DAY.

"I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed...Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies —Ps. lxxvii. 3, 9.

IS fair Nature dying?
This funereal pall,
Must it hang for ever
Darkly over all?

Stormy clouds are hiding
All the morning light;
Has the sun forgotten
How to conquer night?

Must the frozen streamlet
Silent still remain?
Shall the Summer blossoms
Never smile again?

Hush, desponding spirit,
Hush the dark surmise!
Light shall spring from darkness,
Life from death shall rise.

Still the sun is shining
Bright behind the cloud;
Only thy dim vision
Cannot pierce its shroud.

Nature, bound and buried
Under Winter's reign,
Soon shall burst her fetters,
Start to life again.

Silent streams, awaking
From their icy sleep,
Through the vale shall murmur,
Down the mountain leap;

Thousand buds already,
Far beneath the snow,
Dream of Spring's soft breezes,
Dream of Summer's glow.

"Learn, sad heart, our lesson,"
Now they seem to say;
"Dream of Spring and sunshine
Through *thy* wintry day."

Yes, amid thy darkness,
Through the gloom and fear,
Love Divine is watching,
Christ Himself is near.

Since in dying anguish
Once He bowed His head,
Then arose as Victor
From amidst the dead—

Now His tempted people
Need despond no more;
All our foes He conquered,
All our sins He bore.

Love and power unfailing,
Life from death shall bring;
From the grave's dark winter
Everlasting spring!

META HEUSSER.
From "Alpine Lyrics."

January 20.

LONGINGS.

"And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness."—Ps. lv. 6, 7.

O ALL wide places, far from feverous towns!
Great shining seas! pine forests! mountains wild!
Rock-bosomed shores! rough heaths, and sheep-cropt downs!
Vast pallid clouds! blue spaces undefiled!
Room! give me room! give loneliness and air!
Free things and plenteous, in your regions fair.

White dove of David, flying overhead,
Golden with sunlight on thy snowy wings,
Outspeeding thee my longing thoughts are fled
To find a home afar from men and things;
Where in His temple, earth o'erarched with sky,
God's heart to mine may speak, my heart reply.

O God of mountains, stars, and boundless spaces!
O God of freedom and of joyous hearts!
When Thy face looketh forth from all men's faces,
There will be room enough in crowded marts;
Brood Thou around me, and the noise is o'er,
Thy universe my closet with shut door.

Heart, heart, awake! the Love that loveth all
  Maketh a deeper calm than Horeb's cave,
God in thee, can His children's folly gall?
  Love may be hurt, but shall not love be brave?
Thy holy silence sinks in dews of balm,
Thou art my solitude, my mountain-calm.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

* * *

January 21.

WATER TURNED TO WINE.

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage."—JOHN ii. 1, 2.

DEAR Friend, whose presence in the house,
  Whose gracious word benign,
Could once, at Cana's wedding-feast,
  Change water into wine,—

Come, visit us! and when dull work
  Grows weary, line on line,
Revive our souls, and let us see
  Life's water turned to wine.

Gay mirth shall deepen into joy,
  Earth's hopes grow half divine,
When Jesus visits us, to make
  Life's water glow as wine.

The social talk, the evening fire,
The homely household shrine,
Grow bright with angel visits when
The Lord pours out the wine.

For when self-seeking turns to love,
Not knowing mine or thine.
The miracle again is wrought,
And water turned to wine.

J. F. Clarke.

* * *

January 22.

EARTH'S ANGELS.

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me.... The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."—Job xxix. 11, 13.

WHY come not spirits from the realms of glory
To visit earth, as in the days of old—
The times of ancient writ and ancient story?
Is heaven more distant, or has earth grown cold?

To Bethlehem's air was their last anthem given,
When other stars before the One grew dim?
Was their last presence known in Peter's prison,
Or where exultant martyrs raised their hymn?

And are they all within the veil departed?
There gleams no wing along the empyrean now,

And many a tear from human eye has started,
Since angel-touch has calmed a mortal brow.

Yet earth has angels, though their forms are moulded
But of such clay as fashions all below;
Though harps are wanting, and bright pinions folded,
We know them by the love-light on their brow.

I have seen angels by the sick one's pillow,—
Theirs was the soft touch and the soundless tread;
Where smitten hearts were drooping like the willow,
They stood "between the living and the dead."

And if my sight, by earthly dimness hindered,
Beheld no hovering cherubim in air,
I doubted not, for spirits know their kindred,
They smiled upon the wingless watchers there.

I have seen angels in the gloomy prison,—
In crowded halls,—by the lone widow's hearth;
And when they passed, the fallen have uprisen,
The giddy paused, the mourners' hope had birth.

I have seen one, whose eloquence commanding
Roused the rich echoes of the human breast,
The blandishments of wealth and ease withstanding,
That hope might reach the suffering and oppressed;

And by his side there moved a form of beauty,
Strewing sweet flowers along his path of life,

And looking up with meek and love-lent duty,—
I call her *angel*, but he called her *wife*.

Oh, many a spirit walks the world unheeded,
That when its veil of sadness is laid down,
Shall soar aloft, with pinions unimpeded,
And wear its glory like a starry crown.

From "Lyra Anglicana."

* * *

January 23.

WHICH IS BEST?

"What I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."—PHIL. i. 22, 23.

I KNOW not which to choose; whether to live
A little longer here, or to depart:
That would be sweet, to be at rest, to toil
No more; no more feel pain, to have no griefs,
No anxious fears, nor for myself nor others,—
That would be sweet; and sweeter still to have
No more of sin, in action or desire.
But to be near, and feel that nearness near
Unto my Lord! to have a thrilling sense
Of blessedness, the eternity of joy
At hand yet greater, safe, for ever safe!

So to be resting would be sweet. And yet
To live for Christ, to live to do His pleasure,

To fight the fight, clad in His panoply,
Knowing that He looks on the while, and smiles,
By love unfathomable ever moved ;
To go and tell to others of His grace,
The bliss unutterable of the life
That is in Him !
Which shall I choose?—living, to live to Christ ;
Or dying, die to Him—which shall I choose?
Which of the twain shall to Thy glory be,
That, Lord, I pray Thou wilt appoint for me.

H. Swinney.

* * *

January 24.

THE "ATHLETES OF THE UNIVERSE."*

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed."—"As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."—"Of whom the world was not worthy."—2 Cor. iv. 8, 9 ; vi. 10 ; Heb. xi. 38.

THEIR names are names of kings
Of heavenly line,
The bliss of earthly things
Who did resign.

Chieftains they were, who warred
With sword and shield ;

---

* An expression of St. Chrysostom.

Victors for God the Lord
On foughten field.

Sad were their days on earth,
'Mid hate and scorn;
A life of pleasure's dearth,
A death forlorn.

Yet blest that end in woe,
And those sad days;
Only man's blame below—
Above, God's praise!

A city of great name
Was built for them,
Of glorious golden fame—
Jerusalem.

Redeemed with precious blood
From death and sin,
Sons of the Triune God,
They entered in.

So did the life of pain
In glory close:
Lord God, may we attain
Their grand repose!

REV. S. J. STONE.

January 25.

DAVID, THE SHEPHERD.

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep."—1 SAM. xvi. 11.

HE is the youngest, and he herds the sheep;
He goes before them through the dreary wild,
Their voices answer him from steep to steep,
And silence echoes round the fearless child.

His songs of hope and courage never fail,
His mountain harp is strung with chords of joy;
He fears no evil in the dusky vale,
And God is with the lonely shepherd boy.

The lamb, loud bleating in its helpless faith,
Soon sees him bounding to regain the prey:
The lion stretches out his limbs in death;
The bear, with angry growlings, skulks away.

The rosy morning meets him on the hill,
At noon he rests in pastures green and calm,
His evening footsteps haunt the quiet rill,
And midnight listens to his constant psalm.

O cease thy song of wonder and delight!
Where hast thou won that harp of many strings?

Some angel surely dropped it in his flight,
And brushed the sleeping wires with golden wings.

From Bethlehem's quiet valleys, like a chime,
That mountain music rings along the sky;
Caught back, it echoes down the steeps of time,
And coming pilgrims still repeat the cry.

Lost in the magic of his various lay,
The exploits vanish of the proud and brave;
We long to take the crown and sword away,
And leave the harp upon the *shepherd's* grave.

From "Hebrew Children."

* * *

January 26.

DAVID, THE ROYAL PENITENT.

"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."—2 Sam. xii. 13.

OUR childish things are deeper than they seem;
There is a magic in them, and a truth:
The breeze that first dispelled his fatal dream
Comes laden with the memories of his youth.

He hears in Nathan's low, pathetic tale,
Old pastoral echoes indistinct and sweet;

That little, cherished ewe-lamb's dying wail
  Recalls his young ones pressing to his feet.

His sun declines in shadow; wild and gray
  The storm-clouds hurry o'er his weary breast,
Impervious to the sad and struggling ray,
  Until they brighten in the crimson west.

Yet ere ye raise the cry of wrath and shame,
  Let each one commune with himself apart,
And him whose conscious thought is free from blame
  Cast the first stone at this repentant heart.

The saddened cadence of the wailing lyre,
  The burning tears that stain the father's face,
The sobs that rend the warrior's heart of fire,
  Proclaim salvation, not of works, but grace.

The Cross first raised beside a dying thief,
  Flings its kind arms round David and round Paul:
God has included all in unbelief,
  And then He will have mercy upon all.

We seek no further to explore the cloud,—
  Faith, in her blindness, turns to weep and pray;
The Hand that rent for Earth her funeral shroud
  Will roll the burden of her sins away.

From "Hebrew Children."

January 27.

CONTINUE IN PRAYER.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."
COL. iv. 2.

IF we with earnest effort could succeed
To make our life one long connected prayer,
As lives of some perhaps have been and are,—
If, never leaving Thee, we had no need
Our wandering spirits back again to lead
Into Thy presence, but continued there,
Like angels standing on the highest stair
Of the sapphire throne,—this were to pray indeed

But if distractions manifold prevail,
And if in this we must confess we fail,
Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze.

R. C. TRENCH.

* * *

January 28.

DOST THOU NOT CARE?

"And they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?"—"Mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me."—MARK iv. 38; ISA. xxxviii. 14.

I LOVE, and love not; Lord, it breaks my heart
To love, and not to love.

Thou veiled within Thy glory, gone apart
Into Thy shrine, which is above,
Dost Thou not love me, Lord, or care
For this mine ill?—
I love thee here or there;
I will accept thy broken heart: lie still.

Lord, it was well with me in time gone by
That cometh not again,
When I was fresh and cheerful, who but I?
I fresh, I cheerful;—worn with pain
Now, out of sight and out of heart;
O Lord, how long?—
I watch thee as thou art;
I will accept thy fainting heart: be strong.

"Lie still," "be strong," to-day; but, Lord, to-morrow,
What of to-morrow, Lord?
Shall there be rest from toil, be truce from sorrow,
Be living green upon the sward
Now but a barren grave to me,—
Be joy for sorrow?
Did I not die for thee?
Do I not live for thee? leave Me to-morrow.

CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

January 29.

HUMILITY.

"The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."—Ps. xxxvii. 11.

OH! learn that it is only by the lowly
The paths of peace are trod;
If thou wouldst keep thy garments white and holy,
Walk humbly with thy God.

The man with earthly wisdom high uplifted
Is in God's sight a fool;
But he in heavenly truth most deeply gifted
Sits lowest in Christ's school.

The lowly spirit God hath consecrated
As His abiding rest;
And angels by some patriarch's tent have waited,
When kings had no such guest.

The dew that never wets the flinty mountain,
Falls in the valleys free;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert-fountain,
But barren sand the sea......

Round lowliness a gentle radiance hovers,
A sweet, unconscious grace,
Which, even in shrinking, evermore discovers
The brightness in its face.

Where God abides, contentment is and honour,—
Such guerdon meekness knows;
His peace within her, and His smile upon her,
Her saintly way she goes.

Through the strait gate of life she passes stooping,
With sandals on her feet,
And pure-eyed Graces, hand in hand, come trooping
Their sister fair to greet.

The Saviour loves her, for she wears the vesture
With which He walked on earth;
And through her childlike glance, and step, and gesture,
He knows her heavenly birth.

He now beholds this seal of glory graven
On all whom He redeems;
And in His own bright City, crystal-paven,
On every brow it gleams.

The white-robed saints, the throne-steps singing under,
Their state all meekly wear;
Their praise wells up from hidden springs of wonder
That grace has brought them there.

J. D. Burns.

January 30.

"TILL HE COME."

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."—"Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—HEB. x. 37; 1 COR. xi. 26.

"TILL He come"—O let the words
Linger on the trembling chords!
Let the "little while" between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home
Lie beyond that "till He come."

When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast?
Hush, be every murmur dumb;
It is only "till He come."

Clouds and conflicts round us press;—
Would we have one sorrow less?
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is loss,
Death, and darkness, and the tomb,
Only whisper, "Till He come."

See, the feast of love is spread,—
Drink the wine, and break the bread;

Sweet memorials—till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board,
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only "till He come."

BICKERSTETH.

* * *

January 31.

FOR EVERMORE.

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Ps. xvi. 11.

WHEN the day of toil is done,
When the race of life is run,
Father, grant Thy wearied one
Rest for evermore!

When the strife of sin is stilled,
When the foe within is killed,
Be Thy gracious word fulfilled,—
"Peace for evermore."

When the darkness melts away
At the breaking of Thy day,
Bid us hail the cheering ray,—
Light for evermore.

When the heart by sorrow tried
Feels at length its throbs subside,
Bring us, where all tears are dried,
Joy for evermore.

When for vanished days we yearn,
Days that never can return,
Teach us in Thy love to learn
Love for evermore.

When the breath of life is flown,
When the grave must claim its own,
Lord of life, be ours Thy crown,—
Life for evermore!

Ellerton.

February 1.

ANCHORS OF THE SOUL.

"Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day."—Acts xxvii. 29.

THE night is dark,—but God, my God, is here and in command,
And sure am I, when morning breaks, I shall be "at the land."
And since I know the darkness is to Him as sunniest ray,
I'll cast the anchor Patience out, and wish, but wait, for day.

Fierce drives the storm; but winds and waves within His hand are held,
And trusting in Omnipotence, my fears are sweetly quelled.
If wrecked, I'm in His faithful grasp; I'll trust Him though He slay,—
So, letting go the anchor Faith, I'll wish, but wait, for day.

Still seem the moments dreary, long? I rest upon the
Lord;
I muse on His eternal years, and feast upon His word;
His promises, so rich and great, are my support and stay:
I'll drop the anchor Hope ahead, and wish, but wait,
for day.

O Wisdom Infinite! O Light and Love supreme, divine!
How can I feel one fluttering doubt, in hands so dear
as Thine?
I lean on Thee, my gracious Lord, my heart on Thine I
stay,
And casting out the anchor Love, I'll wish, but wait,
for day.
ANON.

* * *

February 2.

CANDLEMAS DAY.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."—"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—ECCLES. iii. 1; 2 COR. iv. 18.

YES, take the greenery away
That smiled to welcome Christmas day;
Untwine the drooping ivy spray.

The holly leaves are dusty all,
Whose glossy darkness robed the wall,
And one by one the berries fall.

Take down the yew ; for with a touch
The leaflets drop, as wearied much
With light and song, unused to such.

Poor evergreens ! why proudly claim
The glory of your lovely name,
So soon meet only for the flame ?

Another Christmas day will show
Another green and scarlet glow,
A fresh array of mistletoe ;

And this new beauty, arch or crown,
Will stiffen, gather dust, and brown,
And in its turn be taken down.

To-night the walls will seem so bare !
Ah, well ! look out, look up, for there
The Christmas stars are always fair !

They will be shining, just as clear,
Another and another year,
O'er all our darkened hemisphere.

So Christmas mirth has floated fast,
The songs of time can never last,
And all is buried with the past ;—

But Christmas love and joy and peace
Shall never fade, and never cease,
Of God's goodwill the rich increase.

F. R. HAVERGAL.

February 3.

LOVE.

"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love."—1 JOHN iv. 16.

SEEMETH not Love at times so occupied
For thee, as though it cared for none beside?

Love found me in the wilderness, at cost
Of painful quests, when I myself had lost.

Love lit the lamp and swept the house all round,
Till the lost money in the end was found.

Love the King's image there would stamp again,
Effaced in part, and soiled with rust and stain.

'Twas Love, whose quick and ever watchful eye
The wanderer's first step homeward did espy;

From its own wardrobe Love gave word to bring
What things I needed—shoes, and robe, and ring.

Love set me up on high; when I grew vain
Of that my height, Love brought me down again.

Love weeps, but from its eyes these two things win
The largest tears—its own, its brother's sin.

Once o'er this painful earth a Man did move,
The Man of Griefs, because the Man of Love.

Hope, Faith, and Love, at God's high altar shine,
Lamp triple-branched, and fed with oil divine:

Two of these triple lights shall once grow pale;
They burn without, but Love within the veil.

O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware,
Love is the only coin which passes there.

The wine of Love can be obtained of none
Save Him who trod the wine-press all alone.

R. C. Trench.

February 4.

ALL IN CHRIST.

"Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge."—Ps. cxlii. 4, 5.

IN Thee my heart, Lord Jesus, finds repose;
  Thou bringest rest to all that weary are.
Until that Dayspring from on high arose,
  I wandered through a night without a star;
    My feet had gone astray
    Upon a lonely way,
Each guide I followed failed me in my need,
Each staff I leaned on proved a broken reed.

Then, when in mine extremity to Thee
I turned, Thy mercy did prevent my prayer:
From that entangling maze it set me free,
And quickly loosed my heavy load of care;
Gave me the lofty scope
Of a heaven-centred hope;
And led me on with Thee, a gentle Guide,
Thither, where pure immortal joys abide.

Thy presence is the never-failing spring
Of life and comfort, in each darkest hour;
And through Thy grace, benignly ministering,
Grief wields a secret, purifying power.
'Tis sweet, O Lord, to know
Thy kindredness with woe;
Sweeter to walk with Thee on ways apart,
Than with the world, where heart is shut to heart!

For Thee eternity reserves her hymn;
For Thee earth has her prayers and heaven her vows;
Thy saints adore Thee, and the seraphim
Under Thy glory veil their starry brows.
Oh may that light divine
On me still clearer shine—
A power, an inspiration from above,
Lifting me higher to Thy perfect love!

Anon.

February 5.

"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US."

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."—PHIL. iii. 13, 14.

LIFELONG our stumbles, lifelong our regret,
  Lifelong our efforts failing and renewed,
  While lifelong is our witness, "God is good:"
Who bore with us till now, bears with us yet,
Who still remembers and will not forget,
  Who gives us light and warmth and daily food,
  And gracious promises half understood,
And glories half unveiled, whereon to set
Our heart of hearts and eyes of our desire;
  Uplifting us to longing and to love,
Luring us upward from this world of mire,
  Urging us to press on and mount above
  Ourselves and all we've had experience of,
Mounting to Him in love's perpetual fire.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

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February 6.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT.

"O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill."—Ps. xliii. 3.

LEAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
  Lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

NEWMAN.

* * *

February 7.

"RÉPOS AILLEURS."

(*Motto of the Dutch patriot, St. Aldegonde.*)

"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."—"For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you."—1 COR. xv. 58; DEUT. xii. 9.

NOBLE resolve of a right noble spirit!
The echo reaches us, so calm and clear;

'Tis the same portion we too would inherit—
Rest—but not here.

Rest!—with all visions of the future blended
Comes that bright hope, so soothing and so dear;
All the long journey past, the conflict ended,
Rest—but not here.

Not here!—while war's alarm is ever sounding,
While half the promised land is unpossest,
On the red battle-plain, with foes surrounding,
Who dares to rest?

Not here!—when autumn's sun is brightly shining,
Yet storm-clouds gather in the darkening west,
On the ripe corn-fields, till that sun's declining,
Who thinks of rest?

We ask it not—on Thine own strength relying,
Gladly, O Father, shall Thy work be done;
Too swift the busy hours of light are flying,
The night draws on.

Not here, but yonder—where in peace for ever
The faithful servants with their Lord are blest;
Where friends depart and foes shall enter never,—
There we shall rest.

Yes; and that prospect now the heart sustaineth,
Lightly each burden and each toil to bear;
For us the promise holds, the rest "remaineth,"
Not here—but there! H. L. L.

February 8.

TRUSTFUL SERVICE.

"Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."—GAL. vi. 9.

LONG though my task may be,
Cometh the end.
God Himself helpeth me,
This is His work, and He
New strength will send.

He will direct my feet,
Strengthen my hand,
Give me my portion meet;
Firm in His promise sweet
Trusting I'll stand.

Up, then, to work again!
God's word is given,
That none shall sow in vain,
But find his ripened grain
Garnered in heaven.

Longer the shadows fall—
Night cometh on;
Low voices softly call,
"Come, here is room for all!
Labour is done!"

ANON.

February 9.

"SHOW ME THY WAY."

"Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way."—"Make thy way straight before my face."—Ex. xxxiii. 13; Ps. v. 8.

DARK the night, the snow is falling;
Through the storm are voices calling,
Guides mistaken and misleading,
Far from home and help receding;
Vain is all, those voices say,—
Show me *Thy* Way!

Blind am I, as those who guide me,—
Let me feel Thee close beside me!
Come as light into my being,
Unto me be eyes, All-seeing!
Hear my heart's one wish, I pray,
Show me Thy Way!

Thou must lead me, and no other,
Truest Lover, Friend, and Brother;
Thou art my soul's shelter, whether
Stars gleam out, or tempests gather.
In Thy presence night is day—
Show me Thy Way!

ANON.

February 10.

"HIS TRUTH SHALL BE THY SHIELD."

"His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day."—Ps. xci. 4, 5.

WHEN the clouds have hid His face,
And His path no more I trace,
And all comforts that illume
Life, have faded into gloom,—
Quenched each earth-enkindled spark,—
Can I trust Him in the dark?
Will my wavering faith still hold
To a promise breathed of old?
When I meet some foe unknown,
Shall I find myself alone?—
Soul, by faith thou walkest here:
Though nor sun nor stars appear,
Wait and watch throughout the night,
And till daybreak ask not sight;
All unseen, thy heavenly Guide
Walks through darkness at thy side.
"Heaven and earth shall pass away,
Not My words," so Christ doth say;
In the gloom "His truth shall be
Shield and buckler unto thee."

In the terrors of the night,
In the mid-day arrow's flight;

When destruction wasteth near,
And all faces blanch with fear;
When a thousand round me fall,—
Shall I trust Thee calm through all?
Will this trembling spirit be
Kept "in perfect peace" by Thee?
Though all stable things may end,
Earth and sky in tempest blend,
Shall I lean upon Thy breast,
And beneath Thy shadow rest?
Wilt Thou arm my soul with power
Ne'er experienced till that hour?
"Heaven and earth shall pass away,
Not My words," so Christ doth say;
In that strait "His truth shall be
Shield and buckler unto thee."

H. A. B.

* * *

February 11.

"HE IS FAITHFUL THAT PROMISED."

"This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."—Ps. xlviii. 14.

AS the weary years go by,
Will my love wax cold and die?
If the pilgrimage be long,
Life be dark, and foes be strong,

Shall I not grow faint and yield?
Shall I ever win the field?
How shall I endure and dare?
How the Cross in patience bear?
How through tedious years maintain
Wavering conflict, oft in vain?—
Nay, but the unchanging Friend
"Will confirm you to the end;"
He who hath the work begun
Ne'er will leave that work undone.
"Heaven and earth shall pass away,
Not My words," so Christ doth say;
In all years "His truth shall be
Shield and buckler unto thee."

When I reach life's earthly bound,
And the shadows darken round,
All familiar things and dear
Fading fast from eye and ear,—
In that hour of mortal smart,
Trembling flesh and failing heart,—
Shall I find my anchor vain,
Parting in that latest strain?—
Hear the Shepherd's voice of old,
Looking on His helpless fold,
Looking far, with gaze divine,
Down the ages' lengthening line,—
"Every feeble sheep I know;
Life eternal I bestow;

None shall pluck them from My hand."
Shall that word of promise stand?
"Heaven and earth shall pass away,
Not My words," so Christ doth say;
In death's hour "His truth shall be
Shield and buckler unto thee."

H. A. B.

February 12.

STRENGTH IN PRAYER.

"They looked unto him, and were lightened....This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."—Ps. xxxiv. 5, 6.

LORD, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make;
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stand forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves the wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong,
That we are ever ŏverborne by care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled,—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

R. C. TRENCH.

February 13.

"PRAYING ALWAYS."

"And Jesus spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—LUKE xviii. 1.

BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay.
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.
Far is the time, remote from human sight,
When war and discord on the earth shall cease,
Yet every prayer for universal peace
Avails the blessed time to expedite.
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see;
Pray to be perfect, though material leaven
Forbid the spirit so on earth to be.
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

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February 14.

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—HEB. x. 36.

A GENTLE Angel walketh throughout a world of woe,
With messages of mercy to mourning hearts below;

His peaceful smile invites them to love and to confide—
Oh follow in His footsteps, keep closely by His side!

So gently will He lead thee through all the cloudy day,
And whisper of glad tidings to cheer the pilgrim way;
His courage never failing, when thine is almost gone,
He takes thy heavy burden and helps to bear it on.

To soft and tearful sadness He changes dumb despair,
And soothes to deep submission the storm of grief and
care;
Where midnight shades are brooding He pours the light
of noon,
And every grievous wound He heals, most surely, if not
soon.

He will not blame thy sorrows, while He brings the
healing balm;
He does not chide thy longings, while He soothes them
into calm;
And when thy heart is murmuring, and wildly asking, why?
He smiling beckons *forward*, points upward to the sky.

He will not always answer thy questions and thy fear;
His watchword is, "Be patient; the journey's end is
near!"
And ever through the toilsome way, He tells of joys to
come,
And points the pilgrim to his rest, the wanderer to his
home.

SPITTA.

February 15.

LIFE.

"What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."—JAMES iv. 14.

LIFE! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me's a secret yet.

Life! we have been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear.
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good-morning!

ANNA L. BARBAULD.

* * *

February 16.

THE LONG GOOD-NIGHT.

"The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord shall give, not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 TIM. iv. 6-8.

I JOURNEY forth rejoicing,
From this dark vale of tears,

To heavenly joy and freedom,
  From earthly bonds and fears;
Where Christ our Lord shall gather
  All His redeemed again,
His kingdom to inherit,—
          Good-night, till then!

Go to thy quiet resting,
  Poor tenement of clay!
From all thy pain and weakness
  I gladly haste away;
But still in faith confiding
  To find thee yet again,
All glorious and immortal,—
          Good-night, till then!

Why thus so sadly weeping,
  Beloved ones of my heart?
The Lord is good and gracious,
  Though now He bids us part.
Oft have we met in gladness,
  And we shall meet again,
All sorrow left behind us,—
          Good-night, till then!

I go to see His glory,
  Whom we have loved below;
I go, the blessed angels,
  The holy saints to know.

Our lovely ones departed,
I go to find again,
And wait for you to join us,—
Good-night, till then!

I hear the Saviour calling,
The joyful hour has come,
The angel-guards are ready
To guide me to our home;
Where Christ our Lord shall gather
All His redeemed again,
His kingdom to inherit,—
Good-night, till then!

UNBEKANNTES.

* * *

February 17.

COMMUNION HYMN.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—1 COR. xi. 26.

FRIENDS in Jesus, now draw near;
Brothers, sisters, enter here;
Filled with humble, glad emotion,
Bowed in lowly, deep devotion.

Come, approach the sacred board,—
'Tis the Supper of the Lord,
Where the choicest things of heaven
From His loving heart are given.

He who, leaving throne and crown,
To our fallen world came down,
All our wants and woes to share,
All our sins and griefs to bear,—

He who journeyed weary years
In the land of toil and tears,
Onward to the cross and grave
Hastening, the lost to save,—

He devised this feast of love,
Thus the coldest heart to move,
Thus to bring Himself more near,
Thus to make Himself more dear.

On the sacred symbols feasting,
All the love of Jesus tasting,
All the Spirit's grace and power,—
O the sweetness of the hour!

Who can tell the joy, the bliss,
Of communion such as this?
Sink, my soul, in deep prostration,
Lowly, fervent adoration!

Earth-bound hearts, at length arise!
Reason, soar beyond the skies!
At Thine altar, Lord, we bend,
Let the fire from heaven descend!

Hush your anthems, cherubim!
Stand astonished, seraphim!

Men on earth, your brothers lowly,
Dare to join your "Holy! Holy!"

Lord, may grace imparted here
In our future lives appear;
"These have been," let others say,
"At the gates of heaven to-day."

COUNT ZINZENDORF.

* * *

February 18.

THE CHILD SET IN THE MIDST.

"And Jesus took a child, and set him in the midst of them."
MARK ix. 36.

THERE is a child of mystery,
Whose name I do not know,
But his little footsteps haunt me
Like music, wherever I go.

His face sleeps soft in the twilight
Of the old, solemn years;
The shade of the Cross is over him,
With its eternal tears.

For the Eyes of infinite sorrow
Looked on him clear and mild,
He in earth's strife and battle
A soft and humble child.

Earth shrouds in tender silence
  The little spot she gave;
The heaping dust of centuries
  Lies on his unknown grave.

I cannot tell how life dealt with him—
  If her face was stern or mild,
As she drew from her mystic bundle
  The lot of my favourite child;

If he faded back like a sunbeam
  Into the realms of day,
Or if he trod with Sorrow
  A yet diviner way.

But I like to think of him passing,
  Like a clear, early star,
Into that quiet region
  Where the infant angels are;

I like to think of his little feet
  Climbing the heavenly stair,
Of his eyes in their wondering meekness
  Waking to glory there.

And the same dim music steals o'er me,
  When I think of that little child,
As breathes from the lips of the lilies
  On which the Saviour smiled.

From "Hebrew Children."

February 19.

WRITTEN AFTER HEARING SOME BEAUTIFUL CHURCH MUSIC IN ROME.

"Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles."—"Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee."—Luke ix. 33; viii. 39.

SWEET voices! seldom mortal ear
Strains of such potency might hear;
My soul that listened seemed quite gone,
Dissolved in sweetness, and anon
I was borne upwards, till I trod
Among the hierarchy of God.
And when they ceased, as time must bring
An end to every sweetest thing,
With what reluctancy came back
My spirits to their wonted track!......
Why, after such a solemn mood,
Should any meaner thought intrude?
Why will not heaven hereafter give
That we for evermore may live
Thus at our spirit's topmost bent?
So asked I in my discontent.

But give me, Lord, a wiser heart.
These seasons come, and they depart;
These seasons, and those higher still
When we are given to have our fill

Of strength and life and joy with Thee,
And brightness of Thy face to see.
They come, or we could never guess
Of heaven's sublimer blessedness ;
They come, to be our strength and cheer
In other times, in doubt or fear.
They go, they leave us blank and dead,
That we may learn, when they are fled,
We are but vapours which have won
A moment's brightness from the sun......
Well for us they do not abide,
Or we should lose ourselves in pride,
And be as angels—but as they
Who on the battlements of day
Walked, gazing on their power and might,
Till they grew giddy in their height.

Then welcome every nobler time,
When, out of reach of earth's dull chime,
'Tis ours to drink with purgèd ears
The music of the solemn spheres,
Or in the desert to have sight
Of those enchanted cities bright
Which sensual eye can never see ;
Thrice welcome may such seasons be !
But welcome too the common way,
The lowly duties of the day,
And all which makes and keeps us low,
Which teaches us ourselves to know,

That we, who do our lineage high
Draw from beyond the starry sky,
Are yet upon the other side,
To earth and to its dust allied.

R. C. Trench.

* * *

February 20.

VESPERS.

"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."—Ps. cxli. 2.

HOW many thousands are worshipping now!
The Lord looks down where His loved ones bow!
Solemn and sweet are the strains that rise
From the haunts of earth to the holy skies.

Where the tall cathedral rears its dome,
The long, loud notes of the organ roam
Through Gothic arches, and nave, and aisle,
Where the last red beams of the sunlight smile.

Bright angels hover where childhood sings,
Or the first faint prayer of the contrite springs;
And they gather the soft, low words that come
Where the household kneel by the hearth of home.

In the low, dim light of the sick man's room
Soft voices are soothing the hour of gloom;

And the parting soul breaks out in praise
As she bids farewell to her earthly days.

And far in the heart of the unknown land
The traveller kneels with his weary band.
And hark! where the ship speeds fast and free,
A sound of prayer o'er the surging sea!

But the curtains of night the landscape shade,
And the voices of earth in silence fade.
There's a Land where life hath no shade nor care—
How many thousands are worshipping there!

C. L. FORD.

* * *

February 21.

THE TWO SEEKERS.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."—"Jesus said, The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—EZEK. xxxiv. 11, 12; LUKE xix. 10.

THERE are two gone out on the starless wild,—
Gone out 'neath the desert night;
Earth's sad and weary and homeless child,
And heaven's fair Lord of light.

And one is seeking, forlorn and blind,—
Can give to his loss no name;
But the other knows well what He stoops to find,—
Knows well what He comes to claim.

Though the hills are dark, though the torrents roll,
By each must his path be trod;
Both seek,—for the Saviour has lost the soul,
And the soul has lost its God.

That piteous cry and that tender call
Come each from a yearning heart;
Through storm and stillness they rise and fall,
And they seem not far apart.

I can hear the sound of their nearing feet,
By a sure attraction drawn;
Those night-long seekers shall surely meet,
As the darkness dies in the dawn.

A. R. Cousin.

February 22.

THE UNSEEN SAVIOUR.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable."—1 Peter i. 8.

JESUS, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine;
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me;
And earth hath ne'er so dear a spot
As where I meet with Thee.

Like some bright dream that comes unsought
When slumbers o'er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought,
And charms my ravished soul.

Yet, though I have not seen, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love Thee, dearest Lord, and will,
Unseen, but not unknown.

When death these mortal eyes shall seal,
And still this throbbing heart,
The rending veil shall Thee reveal,
All glorious as Thou art.

Ray Palmer.

* * *

February 23.

THROUGH PEACE TO LIGHT.

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."—Ps. cxix. 165.

I DO not ask, O Lord, that life may be
A pleasant road;
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load;
I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet;—
I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet.

For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead,—
Lead me aright,
Though strength should falter, and though heart
Through peace, to light. [should bleed,

I do not ask, O Lord, that Thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;
Give me a ray of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear.
I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand,
And follow Thee.
Joy is like restless day, but peace divine
Like quiet night;—
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine,
Through peace, to light.

Adelaide Procter.

February 24.

THE CALLING OF MATTHEW.

"And after these things Jesus went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi [or Matthew], sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them."—Luke v. 27–29.

SAY, when in pity ye have gazed
On the wreathed smoke afar

That o'er some town, like mist upraised,
Hung hiding sun and star,
Then as ye turned your weary eye
To the green earth and open sky,
Were ye not fain to doubt how Faith could dwell
Amid that dreary glare, in this world's citadel?

But Love's a flower that will not die
For lack of leafy screen,
And Christian Hope can cheer the eye
That ne'er saw vernal green;
Then be ye sure that Love can bless
E'en in this crowded loneliness,
Where ever-moving myriads seem to say,
Go—thou art nought to us, nor we to thee—away!

There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

How sweet to them, in such brief rest
As thronging cares afford,
In thought to wander, fancy-blest,
To where their gracious Lord,

In vain, to win proud Pharisees,
Spake, and was heard by fell disease—
But not in vain, beside yon breezy lake,
Bade the meek publican his gainful seat forsake:

At once he rose, and left his gold;
His treasure and his heart
Transferred, where he shall safe behold
Earth and her idols part;
While he beside his endless store
Shall sit, and floods unceasing pour
Of Christ's true riches o'er all time and space,
First angel of His Church, first steward of His Grace.

Nor can ye not delight to think
Where He vouchsafed to eat,
How the Most Holy did not shrink
From touch of sinner's meat;
What worldly hearts and hearts impure
Went with Him through the rich man's door,
That we might learn of Him lost souls to love,
And view His least and worst with hope to meet above.

These gracious lines shed Gospel light
On Mammon's gloomiest cells,
As on some city's cheerless night
The tide of sunrise swells,

Till tower, and dome, and bridge-way proud
Are mantled with a golden cloud,
And to wise hearts this certain hope is given :
"No mist that man may raise, shall hide the eye of
Heaven."

Keble.

* * *

February 25.

RABBI SIMEON'S PARABLE.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—John x. 16.

AND it came to pass as the sun waxed hot,
And crowds to the synagogue came and
went,
That under an oak they pitched his tent,
And the Rabbi sat and taught.

And ever and oft his eyes would stray
Beyond the circle that girt him round ;
On Lebanon's slopes they rested, crowned
With its silvery crown alway ;

As along by the brinded belts of green,
Leading their flocks from rill to rill,
Up where the grass shone lusher still,
Were the distant shepherds seen.

Then lifting his voice, the Rabbi spake
To his young disciples: "Behold ye now
Those sheep, new-washen, on Horon's brow,
Each fair as a fresh snow-flake;

"And mark in their very midst, as well
Ye wondering may, where quiet, as though
It followed beside the mother doe,
There browses a brown gazelle.

"And Imlah the shepherd avoucheth us
Concerning the dappled thing:—One day,
As it watched from a crag the flocks at play,
As yonder disporting thus,

"From its rocky haunts, and its bleating dam's
Udder unweaned, it straightway sped
Down to the pastured plain, and fed
As a lamb among the lambs.

"And at folding-time, when the day is o'er,
Wild-natured still, and as shy as erst,
It follows the flock, and is ofttimes first
To enter the wattled door.

"And therefore doth Imlah the shepherd shield
It even with yet a gentler care
Than any his cherished weanlings share,
As he leadeth them all afield.

" He hath cherished *them* alway ; *they* have left
No wilderness mates, no coverts grown
Wonted by reason of use—alone
To break from their native cleft,

" And join them with strangers. Hearken ye
Now unto my parable's lesson : God,
Who guideth His chosen with staff and rod
Where fairest the pastures be,

" Doth welcome the alien who, to dwell
Among them, all other ties hath riven,
With love that is passing tender—even
As the shepherd yon brown gazelle."

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

* * *

February 26.

" YE DID IT UNTO ME."

" And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—MATT. xxv. 40.

A POOR wayfaring man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief,
That I could never answer, Nay
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came ;

Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love, I knew not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
  He entered; not a word he spake—
Just perishing for want of bread.
  I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,
And ate; but gave me part again:
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For, while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

I spied him, where a fountain burst
  Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;
The heedless water mocked his thirst,
  He heard it, saw it hurrying on.
I ran to raise the sufferer up;—
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,
Dipt, and returned it running o'er;
I drank, and never thirsted more.

'Twas night; the floods were out; it blew
  A winter hurricane aloof.
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
  To bid him welcome to my roof;
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

Stript, wounded, beaten, nigh to death,
  I found him by the highway-side:
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
  Revived his spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment; he was healed.
I had myself a wound concealed;
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw him next, condemned
  To meet a traitor's death at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
  And honoured him 'midst shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die?
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, "I will."

Then in a moment to my view
  The Stranger darted from disguise;
The tokens in His hands I knew—
  My Saviour stood before mine eyes!
He spake, and my poor name He named—
"Of Me thou hast not been ashamed:
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not; thou didst them unto Me."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

February 27.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."—"For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."—HEB. xii. 12; Ps. xxx. 5.

YOUR harps, ye trembling saints,
Down from the willows take;
Loud to the praise of love divine,
Bid every string awake!

Though in a foreign land,
We are not far from home;
And nearer to our house above
We every moment come.

His grace will to the end
Stronger and brighter shine;
Nor present things, nor things to come,
Shall quench the spark divine.

Fastened within the veil,
Hope be your anchor strong;
His loving Spirit the sweet gale
That wafts you smooth along.

Or, should the surges rise,
And peace delay to come,

Blest is the sorrow, kind the storm,
  That drives us nearer home.

  The people of His choice
  He will not cast away;
Yet do not always here expect
  On Tabor's mount to stay.

  When we in darkness walk,
  Nor feel the heavenly flame,
Then is the time to trust our God,
  And rest upon His name.

  Soon shall our doubts and fears
  Subside at His control;
His loving-kindness shall break through
  The midnight of the soul.

  No wonder, when His love
  Pervades your kindling breast,
You wish for ever to retain
  The heart-transporting Guest.

  Yet learn, in every state,
  To make His will your own;
And, when the joys of sense depart,
  To walk by faith alone.

  By anxious fear depressed,
  When from the deep ye mourn,

"Lord, why so hasty to depart,
So tedious in return?"

Still on His plighted love
In all events rely;
The very hidings of His face
Shall train thee up to joy.

Wait, till the shadows flee;
Wait thy appointed hour;
Wait, till the Bridegroom of thy soul
Reveal His love with power.

The time of love will come,
When thou shalt clearly see,
Not only that He shed His blood,
But that it flowed for thee!

Tarry His leisure, then,
Although He seem to stay:
A moment's intercourse with Him
Thy grief will overpay.

Blest is the man, O God,
That stays himself on Thee!
Who wait for Thy salvation, Lord,
Shall Thy salvation see!

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

February 28.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."—DEUT. xxxiii. 25.

O FELLOW-CHRISTIAN! whosoe'er thou art,
This is for thee and me,—
This wine of Trust, that maketh glad the heart
In its adversity:
Drink, therefore, and so bear a braver part;
For as thy days, thy strength shall be.

"Thy days" may be a life-long battle-field,
A warrior's history,
Where every weapon Satan's arm can wield
Shall each be aimed at thee:
But strive in Trust, and thou shalt never yield;
For as thy days, thy strength shall be.

"Thy days" may be a voyage full of fear
Over a stormy sea,
And thou the sleepless helmsman sworn to steer
The good ship warily—
The sharp rocks there,—the roaring whirlpool here,—
Yet as thy days, thy strength shall be.

"Thy days" may be a dull and vacant range,
A long captivity,—
Nought brightly wonderful or sweetly strange
To quicken time for thee;

Less pain or more the only interchange:
Yet as thy days, thy strength shall be.

"Thy days" may be a long continuance
Of much perplexity;
The light it longs for, amid clouds so dense,
Thy mind may scarcely see.
Then on thy Father cast thy confidence;
And as thy days, thy strength shall be.

O burdened sufferer in a world of woe,
Thy sorrow's mystery
Shall pass; *believe*, and one day thou shalt know.
Above thine eyes shall see;
Be not impatient of the veil *below;*
And as thy days, thy strength shall be.

O wakeful toiler in a world of pain,
A long rest waiteth thee!
Seek it not here, but bravely lift again
Tired hand and feeble knee.
If thou wilt *trust*, thy Master will sustain;
And as thy days, thy strength shall be.

Amen! until there shall be no more "days,"
Until the shadows flee,
Until the cloud be lifted from our gaze,
Until in Certainty
Trust dies, and Faith in Sight, and Prayer in Praise,
In God's Eternity!

REV. S. J. STONE.

February 29.

UNUSUAL DAYS.

"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial."—Ex. xii. 14.

THERE come unusual days, which, on life's plain,
Stand out for memory's gaze—days of rare joy,
Or startling incident, or unhoped gain,
Alas! too oft of more than wonted pain,
Or woe that breaks the heart. Such days destroy
The sameness of life's course, and add one more
To the year's units, heaping hence our store
Of good or evil. Ne'er can we maintain
The calendar unbroken, but must meet
The change which is corrective. Lord, when Thou
Put'st in my time a day, as Thou dost now,
Unknown in other years, grant, I entreat,
Such grace illume it, that, whate'er its phase,
It add to holiness, and lengthen praise.

Lord Kinloch.

March 1.

A STORMY DAY IN SPRING.

"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."
—GEN. viii. 22.

THOU art not yet the conqueror, O Spring!
Still Winter seeks to re-assert his reign,
Strives his old forces on the field to bring,
And sends his stormy blasts around again.

But well we know the strife will not be long;
Thy baffled enemy must yield the day;
Soon shall the breath of flowers, the voice of song,
Sunshine and calm, proclaim thy gentle sway.

Yes, ever has the victory been thine,
In the old conflict year by year renewed;
And still in future must the foe resign
His icy sceptre, by thy power subdued.

And from the type we take the comfort given—
Life's wintry storms shall not for ever last;
How welcome the repose, the joy of heaven,
When all the toil and tears of earth are past!

LEONHARD MEISSER. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

March 2.

DARK AND CLOUDY DAYS.

"My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass."—"Hear the word of the Lord, I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow."—Ps. cii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 10, 13.

HOW weary and how worthless this life at times appears!
What days of heavy musings, what hours of bitter tears!
How dark the storm-clouds gather along the wintry skies!
How desolate and cheerless the path before us lies!

And yet these days of dreariness are sent us from above;
They do not come in anger, but in faithfulness and love;
They come to teach us lessons which bright ones could not yield,
And to leave us blest and thankful when their purpose is fulfilled.

They come to draw us nearer to our Father and our Lord,
More earnestly to seek His face, to listen to His word,
And to feel, if now around us a desert land we see,
Without the star of promise, what would its darkness be!

They come to break the fetters which here detain us fast,
And force our long-reluctant hearts to rise to heaven at last;

And brighten every prospect of that eternal home
Where grief and disappointment and fear can never
come.

Then turn not in despondence, poor weary heart, away,
But meekly journey onwards through the dark and
cloudy day:
Even now the bow of promise is above thee tinted
bright,
And soon a joyful morning shall dissipate the night.

Thy God hath not forgot thee, and, when He sees it best,
Will lead thee into sunshine, will give thee bowers of
rest;
And all thy pain and sorrow, when the pilgrimage is
o'er,
Shall end in heavenly blessedness and joys for evermore!

Spitta. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

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March 3.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"Then spake Jesus saying, I am the light of the world."—"Shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—John viii. 12; 1 Peter ii. 9.

SAVIOUR, Thou art my light,
Yet light with earthly shade;
Day, interspersed with night,
My course appointed made.

I walk in gloom awhile;
And then, like break of dawn,
There comes from Thee a smile,
And gloom is all withdrawn.

Thy light is still enough
To guide me safely on,
And show, though path be rough,
The way is rightly gone.

Thy light conducts me back,
When error farthest bore,
And shows, on weariest track,
A sight of heaven before.

My wisdom and my might
A feeble child display;
But still, a child of light,
I grow to perfect day.

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

March 4.

"HE UPBRAIDETH NOT."

"God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."—"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins."—JAMES i. 5; ISA. xliii. 25.

RECEIVE me, Lord! to Thee I fly,
Defeated and dismayed,
Thou only refuge from the sound
Of voices that upbraid!

There is no day from out the past
But has its bitter cry,—
No friend, but I may sometimes read
Reproaches in his eye.

Nature through every changing mood
Has a low chiding tone,
Telling of uncompleted works,
And of occasions flown.

The very father of all lies
Speaks truth, as he recalls
Transgressions, failings numberless,
Infirmities, and falls.

Against Thee only have I sinned,
And all this evil done;
Yet Thou alone dost not upbraid,
O meek and spotless One!

No weak reproaches full of self
Thou makest me endure,
For stronger even than my sin
Is Thy great power to cure.......

And when Thy work is all complete,
Then Thou wilt call it mine;
And I shall hear Thee say, "Well done,
Henceforth My joy is thine."

C. M. NOEL.

March 5.

"LORD, HELP ME."

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities....Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. iv. 15, 16.

THOU, O elder Brother, who
In Thy flesh our trial knew,
Thou who hast been touched by these
Our most sad infirmities,
Change the dream of me and mine,
For the truth of Thee and Thine,
And through chaos, doubt, and strife,
Interfuse Thy calm of life.

If I may not, sin-defiled,
Claim my birthright as a child,
Suffer it that I to Thee
As an hirèd servant be;
Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be Thine.
If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.

Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant;

Let me find in Thine employ
Peace that dearer is than joy;
Out of self to love be led,
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.

WHITTIER.

* * *

March 6.

"THE LORD IS MY HELPER."

"I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—Ps. lxxiii. 23, 24.

I KNOW not if or dark or bright
Shall be my lot;
If that wherein my hopes delight
Is best or not.

My bark is wafted to the strand
By breath divine;
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail
I have on board;
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.

He holds me when the billows smite—
I shall not fall;

If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light,—
He tempers all.

Safe to the land, safe to the land,
The end is this;
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss.

DEAN ALFORD.

March 7.

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER.

"Comfort yourselves together,...comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."—"Comfort one another with these words."—1 THESS. v. 11, 14; iv. 18.

COMFORT one another,
With the hand-clasp close and [tender,
With the sweetness love can render,
And looks of friendly eyes.
Do not wait with grace unspoken
While life's daily bread is broken,—
Gentle speech is oft like manna from the skies.

Comfort one another!
There are words of music ringing
Down the ages, sweet as singing
Of the happy choirs above.
Ransomed saint and mighty angel
Lift the grand deep-voiced evangel,
Where for ever they are praising the Eternal Love.

Comfort one another
By the hope of Him who sought us
In our peril—Him who bought us,
Paying with His precious blood ;
By the faith that will not alter,
By the strength that will not falter,
Leaning on the One divinely good.

Comfort one another !
Let the grave-gloom lie behind you,
While the Spirit's words remind you
Of the home beyond the tomb,
Where no more is pain nor parting,
Fever-flush or tear-drop starting,
But the presence of the Lord, and for all His people room.

SANGSTER.

* * *

March 8.

A PILGRIM AND SOJOURNER.

"They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—HEB. xi. 13.

I BEAR the pilgrim's heart,
If so be this consist
Of joys and comforts missed,
Of weariness and smart
In one from home apart.

But not within my breast
  Is felt, alike in force,
  The wish for onward course,
The impulse ne'er to rest,
The haste of passing guest.

I linger on the way
  Like one who home forgets;
  I seem like one who sets
His dwelling up to stay,
Distaste it as he may.

My God, in me complete
  The part I should sustain!
  Let weariedness and pain
Make, as earth less is sweet,
The race to heaven more fleet!

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

March 9.

"BE OF GOOD CHEER."

"Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation."—Ex. xv. 13.

ONCE out of Egypt, once set free,
  Fear nothing more that may come to thee;
Fear not Egypt's following host,
Fear not Pharaoh's scornful boast.

He may follow, but just to see
The God of the Hebrews fight for thee–
To see the enclosing waves divide,
And Israel safe on the other side.

What though then the road may lie
Where sands are burning and streams run dry?
What though mirage be the fairest view?
Palms of victory grow there too!

Not alone through the desert waste,
With staff in hand we go in haste:
The presence of men may not be found;
The presence of God is all around.

I cannot see Him, but day by day
He goeth before me on the way,
To seek for me, wherever I'm sent,
A place whereon I may pitch my tent.

The barren sands are rich with bread,
The wilderness sees a table spread;
The flinty rock gives out a spring,
Making the desert bloom and sing.

Our shoes of peace will never grow old;
Our staff of strength can the world uphold;
And ever new is our pilgrim's dress,
Made of the Lord's own righteousness.

Findest thou not in the hottest day
A shadow of cloud upon thy way?
Seest thou not in the darkest night
A gleam from the guiding pillar of light?

So press on, till the river is near,
And the hills of Canaan rise bright and clear;
Gather to-day from the desert sand,
But to-morrow the new corn of the land!

Anna Warner.

* * *

March 10.

FROM "THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE."

"So run, that ye may obtain."—1 Cor. ix. 24.

WE have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That, wedge-like, cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;

But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.

LONGFELLOW.

March 11.

WHENCE CAME THEY?

"And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."—LUKE xiii. 29.

NOT from Jerusalem alone
To heaven the path ascends;
As near, as sure, as straight the way
That leads to the celestial day,
From farthest realms extends,
Frigid or torrid zone.

From the balm-breathing, sun-loved isles
Of the bright Southern Sea,

From the dead North's cloud-shadowed pole,
We gather to the gladsome goal,
One common home in thee,
City of sun and smiles!

As from the green lands of the vine,
So from the snow-wastes pale,
We find the ever open road
To the dear City of our God;
From Russian steppe, or Burman vale,
Or terraced Palestine.

Not from swift Jordan's sacred stream
Alone we mount above;
Indus or Danube, Thames or Rhône,
Rivers unsainted and unknown,
From each, the home of love
Beckons with heavenly gleam.

Not from Jerusalem alone
The Church ascends to God;
Strangers of every tongue and clime,
Pilgrims of every land and time,
Throng the well-trodden road
That leads up to the throne.

Dr. Bonar.

March 12.

TO-MORROW.

"He is faithful that promised."—"Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come."—"He that believeth shall not make haste."—HEB. x. 23; HAB. ii. 3; ISA. xxviii. 16.

"YES, to-morrow, love," I fondly said;
"Yes, to-morrow it shall be,
When the sun is shining overhead,
And the birds sing merrily."
But she cried, in blank dismay,
"Not to-morrow! now, to-day!"

In vain I spoke of the stormy night,
And in vain of brighter skies;
And then I saw that in childhood's sight
All hope in the present lies.
Still my little maid would say,
"Not to-morrow! now, to-day!"

Ah me! I thought, when our Father's love
Speaks of to-morrow to us,
And tells of the brighter joys above,
How often we answer thus,
Filled with earth-born, sad dismay,
"Not to-morrow! now, to-day!"

Lord, forgive Thy children's sin in this!
Lord, forgive our wayward cries!

Give us faith to trust Thee for the bliss
Which Thy wisdom here denies,
Till in heaven's pure light we say,
"Not to-morrow! now, to-day!"

S. L. F.

* * *

March 13.

"HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL"

"And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well."—Mark vii. 37.

He hath done all things well!
Here rest, thou weary heart,
When prone to murmur or rebel,
Weak, weary as thou art.

He hath done all things well!
The bitter and the sweet,
The light that cheered, the shades that fell,
Are tempered as is meet.

He hath done all things well!
Things that seem strange and dim
Are working ends thou canst not tell,
In clearest light to Him.

J. D. Burns.

(*Written shortly before his death.*)

March 14.

TRUE RESIGNATION.

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."—HEB. xii. 5, 6.

THERE are who, darkling and alone,
Would wish the weary night were gone,
Though dawning morn should only show
The secret of their unknown woe;
Who pray for sharpest throbs of pain
To ease them of doubt's galling chain,—
"Only disperse the cloud," they cry,
"And if our fate be death, give light and let us die!"

Unwise I deem them, Lord, unmeet
To profit by Thy chastenings sweet;
For Thou wouldst have us linger still
Upon the verge of good or ill,
That on Thy guiding hand unseen
Our undivided hearts may lean,
And this our frail and foundering bark
Glide in the narrow wake of Thy belovèd ark.

* * * *

So be it, Lord; I know it best:
Though not as yet this wayward breast
Beats quite in answer to Thy voice,
Yet surely I have made my choice;

I know not yet the promised bliss,
Know not if I shall win or miss,—
So doubting, rather let me die,
Than close with aught beside, to last eternally!

KEBLE.

* * *

March 15.

IN ADVERSITIES.

"I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities."—Ps. xxxi. 7.

BEING perplexed, I say, Lord, make it right!
Night is as day to Thee, darkness is light.
I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much—
My trembling hand may shake,
My skilless hand may break;—
Thine can make no mistake.

Being in doubt, I say, Lord, make it plain!
Which is the true, safe way? which would be vain?
I am not wise to know,
Nor sure of foot to go;—
My blind eyes cannot see
What is so clear to Thee:
Lord, make it clear to me!

Being in fear, I say, Lord, show Thy face!
Shine on my daily path, lighting each place.

Little will matter then
How death comes, where or when ;
Little, what life may be ;
Little, what griefs I see ;—
All shall be well, with Thee.

Being in straits, I cry, Lord, make a way !
Open a door for me, help me, I pray !
Gold Thou hast, endless store ;
Strength, all I want, and more.
All hearts are in Thy hand,
Nothing can Thee withstand ;—
Lord, look, and give command !

Anna Warner.

* * *

March 16.

STRIVE, WAIT, AND PRAY.

"Rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer."—Rom. xii. 12.

STRIVE ! yet I do not promise
The prize you dream of to-day
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,
And melt in your hand away ;
But another and holier treasure
You would now perchance disdain,
Will come when your toil is over
And pay you for all your pain.

Wait! yet I do not tell you
The hour you long for now
Will not come with its radiance vanished,
And a shadow upon its brow.
Yet far through the misty future,
With a crown of starry light,
An hour of joy you know not
Is winging her silent flight.

Pray! though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your fears,
May never repay your pleading,
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears.
An answer, not that you long for,
But diviner, will come one day;
Your eyes are too dim to see it,—
Yet strive, and wait, and pray!

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

* * *

March 17.

BETHANY.

"Jesus went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there."—"Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha...... Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."—MATT. xxi. 17; JOHN xi. 1, 5.

O PEACEFUL hamlet, where oft, as guest,
My weary Saviour found welcome rest,

With verdant meadows and pomegranate grove,
And sacred Mount Olivet rising above—
Fair Bethany!

Could I but fly from this vain turmoil,
And choose my refuge, with joyful toil
How soon would my humble abode be made,
Under thy palm trees' cool, grateful shade,
Fair Bethany!

Alas! they tell me thou liest low
In dust and ruins, since long ago;—
Has rest then forsaken this world of ours?
Has peace vanished quite, with thy faded bowers,
Fair Bethany?

Ah no! wherever the Lord will stay,
To brighten joy and wipe tears away,
Whether cottage or palace that home may be,
In the East or the West, we shall find it like thee,
Sweet Bethany!

Where at her post faithful Martha stands,
With prayerful heart and with busy hands,
There, in daily labour, in nightly rest,
By Christ's loved presence the home is blest
Like Bethany.

And wherever Mary, at Jesus' feet,
Listens and bends in communion sweet,

There, far from folly's tumultuous noise,
Rests thy Sabbath peace, thy celestial joys,
Sweet Bethany!

Where from sad hearts, in a darkened room,
The prayer of faith goes up through the gloom,
"Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick"—oh, then,
The Master shall come with His comfort again,
As at Bethany.

And where a loving heart longs to bring
To Christ her treasured thank-offering,
The spikenard's fragrance spreads far and wide,—
The soul shall get close to the Saviour's side,
As at Bethany.

Come, Master, and bless our dwelling here!
In sorrow or joy be Thou ever near.
Abide with us, Lord! and then shall our home,
Our pilgrim tent, even here become
Like Bethany!

CARL GEROK.
(*Tr.* H. L. L.)

* * *

March 18.

THE SISTERS OF BETHANY AFTER THE DEATH OF LAZARUS.

"Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house."—JOHN xi. 20.

ONE grief, one faith, O sisters of the dead!
Was in your bosoms—thou, whose steps, made fleet

By keen hope fluttering in the heart which bled,
Bore thee, as wings, the Lord of Life to greet;
And thou, that duteous in thy still retreat
Didst wait His summons, then with reverent love
Fall weeping at the blest Deliverer's feet,
Whom e'en to heavenly tears thy woe could move.
And which to Him, the All-seeing and All-just,
Was loveliest—that quick zeal, or lowly trust?
Oh! question not, and let no law be given
To those unveilings of its deepest shrine,
By the wrung spirit made in outward sign:
Free service from the heart is all in all to Heaven.

Mrs. Hemans.

* * *

March 19.

ISHMAEL.

"And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, As for Ishmael, I have heard thee."—Gen. xvii. 18, 20; read ch. xvi. 7–12.

THE day-dreams of the archer-boy
Are full of wild, imperious joy;
Beneath the stars, in calmer moods,
He dreams of desert solitudes.

In every forest wind he hears
The rush of banners and of spears;

He sees, above, heaven's crystal field
Bend o'er him like a warrior's shield.

The spiky corn lies reaped and bound
In arrowy heaps upon the ground;
The mirthful harvest song he leaves,
And weeps among the golden sheaves.

The sun goes down, the dews fall cold,
The flocks come bleating to the fold;
The still, small voice of peace and rest
Awakes no answer in his breast.

Oh for a larger, louder life!
For scenes of passion, change, and strife!
His pastoral home, its quiet joy,
They only chafe the archer-boy.

And it shall come, impatient child!
Thy tent is pitched upon the wild;
Thy restless foot shall wander free,
Each mortal hand opposing thee.

Thy fleet and dusky children wait
In thousands at Life's mystic gate;
God's promises are firm and true
To Isaac, and for Ishmael too.

Thy dark-browed sons, from age to age,
Shall keep their shifting heritage;

Thy spear and quiver, as before,
Their title-deeds for evermore.

But wait a while,—nor grudge to dwell
In peace one hour, young Ishmael,
Where Abraham's strong prayers arise
For thee, beyond the silent skies.

He hears them not;—but they are heard,
The azure deeps of heaven are stirred;
A Hand of power, by night and day,
Is pledged to guide his devious way.

The first-born son will bear a part
Till life's last hour, in Abraham's heart,—
His soul, in silent love and grief,
Will yearn upon his Desert Chief.

Yet to Jehovah's righteous will
The prayer of faith can trust him still,—
Look calm across earth's misty veil,
And still believe when visions fail.

And Hagar, as she marks the wild
Impetuous fancies of her child,—
Hagar would tremble; but she hears
The fountain's murmur through her tears.

From "Hebrew Children."

March 20.

SOWING IN HOPE.

"That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."—"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."—JOHN iv. 36; Ps. cxxvi. 5.

SOW with a generous hand;
  Pause not for toil or pain;
Weary not through the heat of summer,
  Weary not through the cold spring rain;
But wait till the autumn comes
  For the sheaves of golden grain.

Scatter the seed, and fear not;
  A table will be spread.
What matter if *you* are too weary
  To eat your hard-earned bread?
Sow, while the earth is broken,
  For the hungry must be fed.

Sow! while the seeds are lying
  In the warm earth's bosom deep,
And your warm tears fall upon it,
  They will stir in their quiet sleep;
And the green blades rise the quicker,
  Perchance, for the tears you weep.

Then sow, for the hours are fleeting,
  And the seed must fall to-day;

And care not what hands shall reap it,
Or if *you* shall have passed away
Before the waving cornfields
Shall gladden the sunny day.

Sow! and look onward, upward,
Where the starry light appears—
Where, in spite of the coward's doubting,
Or your own heart's trembling fears,
You shall reap in joy the harvest
You have sown to-day in tears.

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

* * *

March 21.

LIFE IN EARNEST.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
—ROM. xii. 11.

HE liveth long who liveth well!
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain.

He liveth long who liveth well!
All else is being flung away;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly done each day.

Waste not thy being; back to Him,
Who freely gave it, freely give;

Else is that being but a dream,—
'Tis but to *be*, and not to *live.*

Be what thou seemest; live thy creed;
Hold up to earth the torch divine;
Be what thou prayest to be made;
Let the great Master's steps be thine.

Fill up each hour with what will last;
Buy up the moments as they go;—
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below.

Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure;
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright;
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,
And find a harvest-home of light.

Dr. Bonar.

March 22.

WORDS IN SEASON TO THE WEARY.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?"—"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."—Joshua vii. 10; 2 Tim. ii. 3.

"TIRED!"—Well, what of what?
Didst fancy life was spent on beds of ease,
Fluttering the rose-leaves scattered by the breeze?

Come, rouse thee! work while it is called to-day;
Coward, arise! go forth upon thy way!

"Lonely!"—And what of that?
Some must be lonely! 'tis not given to all
To feel a heart responsive rise and fall,
To blend another's life into our own;—
Work may be done in loneliness. Work on!

"Dark!"—Well, what of that?
Didst fondly dream the sun would never set?
Dost fear to lose thy way? Take courage yet!
Learn thou to walk by faith, and not by sight;—
Thy steps will guided be, and guided right.

"Hard!"—Well, what of that?
Didst fancy life a summer holiday,
With lessons none to learn, and naught but play?
Go, get thee to thy task! Conquer or die!
It must be learned. Learn it then, patiently.

"No help!"—Nay, 'tis not so!
Though human help be far, thy God is nigh;
Who feeds the ravens, hears His children's cry.
He's near thee wheresoe'er thy footsteps roam,
And He will guide thee, light thee, help thee home."

Anon.

March 23.

"SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS."

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding."—Luke xii. 35, 36.

BE sober, then, be vigilant; forbear
To hope, or covet aught beyond thy sphere.
Only be strong to labour, and allow
Thy Father to appoint thee *where* and *how*.
Serve God! and winter's cold, or summer's heat,
The breezy mountain, or the dusty street,—
Time, season, circumstance, alike shall be
The welcome ministers of joy to thee.
His kingdom is within thee; rise, and prove
A present earnest of the bliss above!

Heaven knows no disappointment; earth alone
Mourns wishes unfulfilled, and hopes o'erthrown.
Pass but the golden gates,—distrust and doubt,
The brood of guilt and sin, are left without.
Once bathe thine eyes in heaven's essential light,
Which casts no shadow, and expects no night,
And all God's mighty works and wondrous ways
Shall wake no thought that shall not speak in praise;
For thou shalt see Him as He is—and then
Shalt own that "God is love." Amen! amen!

Hankinson.

March 24.

LIGHTS ON THE PATHWAY.

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."—"The Lord will lighten my darkness."—ISA. ii. 5; 2 SAM. xxii. 29.

THE clouds are driven across the skies;
But high above them, in the blue,
I see the silent stars, like eyes
Of holy watchers shining through.

The cloud has come—the cloud has gone—
And gone the shadows cold and gray;
But the calm stars are shining on,
And keep their everlasting way.

So to the pilgrim's eye ye shine,
Ye bright realities of heaven!
So gleams your clear and radiant sign,
Through clouds across our pathway driven.

Dreary and dark the way would be,
And sad the hearts that o'er it roam,
If in your light we could not see
It is the way that leads us home.

J. D. BURNS.

March 25.

THE HERMIT'S VIGIL.

"He [Christ] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—"Jesus said, Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."—HEB. vii. 25; JOHN vi. 37.

HERE is the ancient legend I was reading
  From the black-letter vellum page last night;
Its yellow husk holds lessons worth the heeding,
    If we unfold it right.

The tome is musty with dank superstition,
  From which we shrink, recoiling to th' extreme
Of an unfaith, that, with material vision,
    Accounts as myth or dream

Problems too subtle for our clumsy fingers,
  High truths that burn beyond our reach, as far
As o'er the firefly in the grass that lingers
    Burns yonder quenchless star.

Give rather back the old hallucination,
  The ecstasies, the transport, terror, grief,
Of faith so human, than the drear negation
    Of dumb, dead unbelief!

But hear the story now:—Within a forest
  By black morasses girt, a hermit dwelt;

And as, one midnight, when the storm raged sorest,
In his lone hut he knelt

In ghostly penance, sounds of fiendish laughter
Smote on the tempest's lull with hideous jar,
That sent the gibbering echoes pealing after,
Through windy wolds afar.

"Christ bring ye ban!" he cried, the door wide flinging;
"Speed ye some whither with perdition's dole?"
"We go" (from out the wrack a shriek came ringing)
"To seize the emperor's soul,

"Who lies this hour death-stricken." Execration
Thereat still louder filled the sulphurous air.
Before the rood the hermit sank,—"Salvation
Grant, Lord, in his despair!"

And agonizing thus, with lips all ashen
He prayed; till back, with ghastlier rage and roar,
The demon rout rushed, strung to fiercer passion,
And crashed his osier door.

"Speak, fiend! I do adjure thee! Came repentance
Too late?" With hissing curse was answer made:
"Heaped high within the judgment scales for sentence
The emperor's sins were laid,

"And downward, downward, with a plunge descended
Our scale, till we exulted,—when a moan,

'*Save, Christ, O save me!*' from his lips was rended
Out with his dying groan.

"Quick in the other scale did Mercy lay it;
Lo! *it outweighed his guilt!*"—"Ha! baffled! braved!"
The hermit cried; "hence, fiends! nor dare gainsay it—
The emperor's soul is saved!"

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

* * *

March 26.

OUR SCHOOL-TIME.

"I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go."—ISA. xlviii. 17.

THIS life is but a school-time,
In which we learn to love
The friends we see around us,
The unseen God above.

Some learn by active service,
Others in grief and pain;
Some seem to reap in gladness,
The rest to toil in vain.

The one thing is, to study
To seek our Lord in all;
His great love to remember
Whatever may befall.

We know the blessed story
Of how He came to save,
And lived as man amongst us,
From childhood to the grave.

And earth has now her tokens
That He has touched with light,—
Memorials of His kindness
Are ever in our sight.......

The stars are all the dearer
For that one wanderer bright
That shone of old at Bethlehem
Upon the wise men's sight.

The jewelled lights of sunset,
The glory of the dawn,
The snowy clouds of heaven,
The dew upon the lawn,

The wild sea's tossing splendour
Of green and crested waves,
The firmly-planted mountain,
The silent rocky caves,

The voice of sighs and weeping,
The bier where lies the dead,—
All speak to us of Jesus,
Of words that He has said.

The boats upon the water,
  The fishers on the shore,—
These things remind us of Him,
  These, and a thousand more.

And pain and weakness make Him
  Nearer and dearer seem,
Till life becomes a story
  Of which He is the theme.

ANON.

* * *

March 27.

THE WELL AT SYCHAR.

ON FINDING IT FILLED UP BY THE ARABS.

"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well."—JOHN iv. 6.

THEY have stopped the sacred well which the
  patriarchs dug of old,
Where they watered the patient flocks at noon, from
  the depths so pure and cold;

Where the Saviour asked to drink, and found at noon
  repose;—
But the living spring He opened then no human hands
  can close.

They have scattered the ancient stones, where at noon
He sat to rest;
None ever shall rest by that well again, and think how
His accents blessed;—

But the Rest for the burdened heart, the Shade in the
weary land,
The riven Rock with its living streams, for ever unmoved shall stand.

Earth has no Temple now, no beautiful House of God;
Or earth is all one temple-floor which those sacred feet
have trod.

But in heaven there is a Throne, a Home, and a House
of Prayer:
Thyself the Temple, Thyself the Sun; our pilgrimage
endeth there!

MRS. CHARLES.

* * *

March 28.

THE DESIRED HAVEN.

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still....So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."—Ps. cvii. 29, 30.

"LORD, the waves are breaking o'er me and
around;
Oft of coming tempests I hear the moaning sound;

Here there is no safety, rocks on either hand,—
'Tis a foreign roadstead, a strange and hostile land.
Wherefore should I linger? others gone before
Long since safe are landed on a calm and friendly shore:
Now the sailing orders in mercy, Lord, bestow,—
Slip the cable, let me go!

"Lord, the night is closing round my feeble bark,—
How shall I encounter its watches long and dark?
Sorely worn and shattered by many a billow past,
Can I stand another rude and stormy blast?
Ah! the promised haven I never may attain,
Sinking and forgotten amid the lonely main;
Enemies around me, gloomy depths below,—
Slip the cable, let me go!

"Lord, I would be near Thee, with Thee where Thou art;
Thine own word hath said it, 'tis 'better to depart,'
There to serve Thee better, there to love Thee more,
With Thy ransomed people to worship and adore.
Ever to Thy presence Thou dost call Thine own;
Why am I remaining, helpless and alone?
Oh, to see Thy glory, Thy wondrous love to know!—
Slip the cable, let me go!

"Lord, the lights are gleaming from the distant shore,
Where no billows threaten, where no tempests roar.

Long-belovèd voices calling me I hear,—
Oh, how sweet *their* summons falls upon my ear!
Here are foes and strangers, faithless hearts and cold;
There is fond affection, fondly proved of old!
Let me haste to join them, may it not be so?—
Slip the cable, let me go!"

Hark, the solemn answer!—hark, the promise sure!
"Blessed are the servants who to the end endure!
Yet a little longer hope and tarry on,
Yet a little longer, weak and weary one!
More to perfect patience, to grow in faith and love,
More My strength and wisdom and faithfulness to prove;
Then the sailing orders the Captain *shall* bestow,—
Slip the cable, let thee go!"

H. L. L.

* * *

March 29.

WAITING.

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."—Heb. xii. 6, 10.

LORD of my nights and days!
Let my desire still be,
Not to be rid of earth,
But nearer Thee.

If I may nearer draw
  Through lengthened grief and pain,
Then to continue here
  Must be my gain;

Till I have strengthened been,
  To take a wider grasp
Of that eternal life
  I long to clasp;

Till I am so refined
  I can the glory bear,
Of that excess of joy
  I thirst to share......

Sorrow's long lesson o'er,
  Death's discipline gone through,
Thou wilt unfold to me
  What joy can do!

Glad souls are on the wing,
  From earth to heaven they flee;
At last Thine hour will come
  To send for *me*.

Reveal the mighty love
  That binds Thy heart to mine;
Thy counsels and my will
  Should intertwine.

Lord of my heart and hopes!
Let my desire still be,
Not to be rid of earth,
But nearer Thee.

C. M. NOEL.

* * *

March 30.

GOOD FRIDAY.

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—PHIL. ii. 8.

IS it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort than an angel's mirth?
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn,
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?

Sooner than where the Easter sun
Shines glorious on yon open grave,
And to and fro the tidings run,
"Who died to heal, is risen to save"?
Sooner than where upon the Saviour's friends
The very Comforter in light and love descends?

Yet so it is: for duly there
The bitter herbs of earth are set,

Till tempered by the Saviour's prayer,
And with the Saviour's life-blood wet,
They turn to sweetness, and drop holy balm,
Soft as imprisoned martyr's death-bed calm.

* * * * *

O shame beyond the bitterest thought
That evil spirit ever framed,
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,
Yet feel their haughty hearts untamed—
That souls in refuge, holding by the Cross,
Should wince and fret at this world's little loss!

Lord of my heart, by Thy last cry,
Let not Thy blood on earth be spent—
Lo, at Thy feet I fainting lie,
Mine eyes upon Thy wounds are bent,
Upon Thy streaming wounds my weary eyes
Wait like the parchèd earth on April skies.

Wash me, and dry these bitter tears;
O let my heart no further roam;
'Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since—O call Thy wanderer home,
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide.

KEBLE.

March 31.

EASTER EVE.

"And Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre."—MATT. xxvii. 60, 61.

A NIGHT of silence and of gloom;
My Master lieth in the tomb—
Mine was the sin and His the doom!

So on this awful eventide,
My self-trust gone, my wealth of pride
All spent and lost, I fain would hide.

And where? Lo, on this eve, alone
I come with contrite prayer and moan
And lay me down before the Stone.

* * * *

And the deep stillness hath a cry
Reaching my soul, and none are by
To drown it with their blasphemy.

It saith, "O ingrate heart, for thee
The passion in Gethsemane;
For thee the scourge, the mockery,

"The scarlet robe, the thorny wreath;
For thee the load He sank beneath;
For thee the Cross, the cry, the death!

"Yea, all for thee! and having learned
How great that love was, hast thou spurned
The due of gratitude it earned?

"Thankless and cold! thy broken vow
Of love and service asks thee now,
Here at His tomb, what doest thou?"

'Tis true—yet am I fain to come;
In grief I have no other home
But near Him, though 'tis near His tomb.

* * * *

So on this holy eventide
I lay me down as at His side,
And pray to die as He has died,

That I may rise to meet the strife
With this dead heart renewed, and rife
With impulses of love and life.

But can it be, with one so vain,
So weak, so fearful of disdain?
"It can be! by the right of pain,

"And curse, and cross, and this dark night!
Thou shalt endure through all the fight,
And as thy days shall be thy might."

Then, blessed Master! only Friend!
Be near, inspire, sustain, defend;
In prayer I battle till the end,

Till on this Lenten night forlorn
There breaks the final Easter morn,
And the unsetting sun is born.

* * * *

So on this blessed eventide
Here at Thy tomb, here at Thy side,
I lift one prayer, Abide, abide!

The old, sweet prayer so earnestly
Prayed one sad eve, and heard of Thee—
Abide with me, abide with me!

Rev. S. J. Stone.

April 1.

EASTER MORNING.

"I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."—REV. i. 17, 18 (*Revised Version*).

"WELCOME, happy morning!" age to age shall say;
Hell to-day is vanquished, heaven is won to-day!
Lo! the Dead is living, God for evermore!
Him, their true Creator, all His works adore!

Earth with joy confesses, clothing her for Spring,
All good gifts returning with her returning King.
Bloom in every meadow, leaves on every bough,
Speak His sorrows ended, hail His triumph now.

Months in due succession, days of lengthening light,
Hours and passing moments praise Thee in their flight;
Brightness of the morning, sky, and fields, and sea,
Vanquisher of darkness, bring their praise to Thee!

Maker and Redeemer, Life and Health of all,
Thou from heaven beholding human nature's fall,

Of the Father's Godhead true and only Son,
Manhood to deliver, manhood didst put on.

Thou, of life the author, death didst undergo,
Tread the path of darkness, saving strength to show.
Come then, True and Faithful, now fulfil Thy word;
'Tis Thine own third morning! Rise, O buried Lord!

Loose the souls long prisoned, bound with Satan's chain,
All that now is fallen raise to life again;
Show Thy face in brightness, bid the nations see;
Bring again our daylight, day returns with Thee!

"Welcome, happy morning!" age to age shall say;
Hell to-day is vanquished, heaven is won to-day!

ELLERTON.

* * *

April 2.

HALLELUJAH! JESUS LIVES!

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."—1 COR. xv. 20.

HALLELUJAH! Jesus lives!
He is now the Living One.
From the gloomy house of death
Forth the Conqueror has gone,
Bright Forerunner to the skies
Of His people, yet to rise.

Jesus lives! let all rejoice!
  Praise Him, ransomed ones of earth!
Praise Him, in a nobler song,
  Cherubim of heavenly birth;
Praise the Victor King, whose sway
Sin, and death, and hell obey.

Jesus lives! why weepest thou?
  Why that sad and frequent sigh?
He who died our Brother here,
  Lives our Brother still on high,—
Lives for ever, to bestow
Blessings on His Church below.

Jesus lives! and thus, my soul,
  Life eternal waits for thee:
Joined to Him, thy living Head,
  Where He is thou too shalt be;
With Himself, at His right hand,
Victor over death shalt stand.

Jesus lives! to Him my heart
  Draws with ever new delight:
Earthly vanities, depart!
  Hinder not my heavenward flight!
Let this spirit ever rise
To its magnet in the skies.

Hallelujah! angels, sing,
  Join us in our hymn of praise!

Let your chorus swell the strain
  Which our feebler voices raise :
Glory to our God above,
And on earth His peace and love !

C. B. Garve. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

* * *

April 3.

EASTER DAY IN A MOUNTAIN CHURCHYARD.

"If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—1 Thess. iv. 14.

THOU hast wept mournfully, O human love !
  Even on this greensward ; night hath heard thy cry,
Heart-stricken one ! thy precious dust above ;
  Night, and the hills, which sent forth no reply
    Unto thine agony !
But He who wept like thee, thy Lord, thy Guide,
Christ hath arisen, O love ! thy tears shall all be dried.

Dark must have been the gushing of those tears,
  Heavy the unsleeping phantom of the tomb
On thine impassioned soul, in elder years,
  When, burdened with the mystery of its doom,
    Mortality's thick gloom
Hung o'er the sunny world, and with the breath
Of the triumphant rose came blending thoughts of death.

But that dark night is closed; and o'er the dead,
Here, where the gleamy primrose tufts have blown,
And where the mountain-heath a couch has spread,
And, settling oft on some gray lettered stone,
The redbreast warbles lone,
And the wild-bee's deep drowsy murmurs pass,
Like a low thrill of harp-strings, through the grass,—

Here, 'midst the chambers of the Christian's sleep,
We o'er death's gulf may look with trusting eye;
For Hope sits, dovelike, on the gloomy deep,
And the green hills wherein these valleys lie
Seem all one sanctuary
Of holiest thought—nor needs their fresh, bright sod,
Urn, wreath, or shrine, for tombs all dedicate to God.

Christ hath arisen! O mountain peaks! attest—
Witness, resounding glen and torrent wave!
The immortal courage in the human breast
Sprung from that victory—tell how oft the brave
To camp, 'midst rock and cave,
Nerved by those words, their struggling faith have borne,
Planting the Cross on high above the clouds of morn!

* * * *

Those days are past—the mountains wear no more
The solemn splendour of the martyr's blood;
And may that awful record, as of yore,
Never again be known to field or flood!
E'en though the faithful stood

A noble army, in the exulting sight
Of earth and heaven, which blessed their battle for the right!

But many a martyrdom by hearts unshaken
  Is yet borne silently in homes obscure;
And many a bitter cup is meekly taken;
  And, for the strength whereby the just and pure
      Thus steadfastly endure,
Glory to Him, whose victory won that dower,
Him, from whose rising streamed that robe of spirit-power!

Glory to Him! Hope to the suffering breast!
  Light to the nations! He hath rolled away
The mists, which, gathering into deathlike rest,
  Between the soul and heaven's calm ether lay;—
      His love hath made it day
With those that sat in darkness. Earth and sea,
Lift up glad strains for man by truth divine made free!

Mrs. Hemans.

* * *

April 4.

EASTER SONNET.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary!"—"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."—John xx. 16; Isa. xliii. 1.

HE said unto her, "Mary!" With one cry,
  And in one moment, she was at His feet.
Oh, to her desolate, thirsting soul how sweet

The calling! as to those in days gone by
His voice on the dark waters, "It is I!"
  O great Good Shepherd! so He came to meet
  One sheep that cried to find Him—so to greet
Her for whose need He was unseen so nigh.
  He knows His sheep, and calls them all by name;
They hear not others, but His voice they know:
She heard and knew the calling sweet and low,
  And to His feet in reverent rapture came.
O my great Master! thus and evermore
Thee would *I* seek and find, love and adore.

Rev. S. J. Stone.

* * *

April 5.

THE TRUE VINE.

"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff."—"I am the true vine."—Num. xiii. 23; John xv. 1.

When Israel lay in Kadesh, where Paran's wilds expand,
Into the north twelve mighty men were sent to spy the land;
Each tribe gave in its kingliest, before the hosts of light
Rose up all in Jehovah's name to spoil the Amorite.

Down in the fertile valley, where Eshcol's waters roll,
They felled the lordly cedar-tree and wrought it to a pole,

And then they turned them south again, and bore to
Israel's line
The first-fruits of the gift of God, the first-ripe of the vine.

And what to us, the world exclaims, that Vine branch
borne of two?
O fools and blinded, is it not a figure of the True?
It is the sum of all things; yea, that deed of prescience
done
Speaks of two Dispensations, and the Gift that made
them one.

They who were grace-expectant, they who lived and
died in grace,—
They who saw Christ far off, and they who see, though
veiled, His face,—
Those went before; these follow; they are all one
Brotherhood,
And in the midst the True Vine hangs upon the holy rood.

Oh, come, ye heavy laden, and henceforth restful be;
Oh, come, your weary weight of sin long since was laid
on Me,—
This is Thy call, O Merciful; to all who will is given
To eat the living Bread and drink the mystic wine of
heaven.

Ah, in our bosom's Hebron the son of Anak dwells,
'Mid pride-built walls, embattled towers, and heaven-
high citadels!

More faithless than the faithless ten, we will not break
that sway;
We think to win the pleasant land, but not the Cross's
way.

Oh, first with grace preparing, then with gift no tongue
can show,
Lion of Judah, visit us! true Joshua, smite our foe!
Come from Thy heaven to our hearts, our health, our
food to be,
And cast imaginations down, and subject all to Thee.

Then, not alone our fathers Thy Presence shall bring nigh;
Angels, archangels, sing with us, and all heaven's company;
And now, what reck we ills to come? They cannot
mar our rest;
Our Love is ours, and we are His; we want not, we
are blest.

ALEXANDER.

* * *

April 6.

AWAKENINGS.

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou blessest the springing thereof."—"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."—Ps. lxv. 9, 10; Isa. xxvi. 19.

"FROM thy long winter sleep,
Nature, arise!"

Thus speaks the Voice divine
From yonder skies.
Then murmurs soft and low
Answer the call,—
Voices of bird and bee,
And fountain's fall.
The balmy breezes come,
The gentle rain;
All over vale and hill
Life wakes again.

"From sin's long deadly sleep,
Poor soul, arise!"
Thus sounded Mercy's voice
From yonder skies.
Then Satan's captive woke,
And burst his chain;
The dreams of midnight fled,
All false and vain.
The mighty Friend drew near,
Faithful and true;
Old things had passed away,
All was made new!

"From sorrow's heavy sleep,
Sad heart, arise!"
So spoke the voice of Love
From yonder skies.
Then through fast falling tears
Hope's rainbow stole;

Her soothing song was heard
  Within my soul,—
"His promise hath not failed
  Through the sad past;
Weeping has long endured,
  Joy comes at last!"

"From death's long winter sleep,
  My people, rise!"
Soon shall that summons sound
  From yonder skies.
Then from far severed graves,
  O'er land and sea,
How gladly shall we haste,
  O Lord, to Thee!
Soon shall that morning dawn,
  This night be gone;—
Belovèd ones! till then
  In hope rest on!

H. L. L.

* * *

April 7.

SPRING.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come."—Song of Sol. ii. 11, 12.

VOICES of Spring, with what gladness I hear you
  again!
Praises to Heaven ascending from mountain and plain!

I too would raise
Humbly, an anthem of praise,
Joining in Nature's glad strain.

Listen, my soul, to the chorus on earth and in air;
All things created the praise of their Maker declare!
Shalt thou alone,
Silent, refuse to make known
All the rich grace thou dost share?

Hath not the heavenly spring-time of hope come to thee,
From the long winter of error and sorrow set free?
While its soft light,
Stealing across the dark night
Ev'n of the grave, thou canst see!

O Thou almighty, all-merciful Saviour and Lord!
Would that each feeling, each thought of my soul, could record
All the deep love,
Which, from Thy fulness above,
Into this heart Thou hast poured!

Now let me praise Thee! Thou knowest how blindly and long
All Thy kind dealings I read and interpreted wrong,
Murmured and wept,
Wilfully wandered and slept
In my rebellion so strong.

But as the cold frosts of winter dissolve and give way,
When on their surface the sunshine and soft breezes play,

So from the heart
Coldness and darkness depart
Under Thy love's cheering ray.

Give me a harp! from the valley of tears let me join
Those who are singing above in the Presence Divine:
Anthems of heaven—
Praise from a sinner forgiven—
Sweetly the echoes combine!

META HEUSSER. *From "Alpine Lyrics."*

April 8.

THE RAINBOW.

"And God said, I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."—GEN. ix. 12, 13.

STILL young and fine! but what is still in view
We slight as old and soiled, though fresh and new.
How bright wert thou when Shem's admiring eye
Thy burnished, flaming arch did first descry!
When Terah, Nahor, Haran, Abram, Lot,
The youthful world's gray fathers, in one knot
Did with intentive looks watch every hour
For thy new light, and trembled at each shower!
When thou dost shine, darkness looks white and fair,
Storms turn to music, clouds to smiles and air;
Rain gently spends his honey-drops, and pours
Balm on the cleft earth, milk on grass and flowers.

Bright pledge of peace and sunshine! the sure tie
Of my Lord's hand, the object of His eye!
When I behold thee, though my light be dim,
Distant, and low, I can in thine see Him
Who looks upon thee from His glorious throne,
And minds the covenant 'twixt all and One.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

* * *

April 9.

"O LORD, THOU KNOWEST!"

"O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee."—"And the Lord said, I know their sorrows."—"O Lord, thou knowest: remember me."—PS. lxix. 5; EX. iii. 7; JER. xv. 15.

THOU knowest, Lord, the weariness and sorrow
Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest;
Cares of to-day, and burdens for to-morrow,
Blessings implored, and sins to be confessed;
I come before Thee at Thy gracious word,
And lay them at Thy feet—Thou knowest, Lord.

Thou knowest all the past,—how long and blindly
On the dark mountains the lost wanderer strayed,—
How the Good Shepherd followed, and how kindly
He bore it home, upon His shoulders laid,
And healed the bleeding wounds, and soothed the pain,
And brought back life, and hope, and strength again.

Thou knowest all the present,—each temptation,
  Each toilsome duty, each foreboding fear;
All to myself assigned of tribulation,
  Or to beloved ones, than self more dear!
All pensive memories, as I journey on,
Longings for vanished smiles, and voices gone!

Thou knowest all the future,—gleams of gladness,
  By stormy clouds too quickly overcast,—
Hours of sweet fellowship, and parting sadness,
  And the dark river to be crossed at last.
Oh, what could confidence and hope afford
To tread that path, but this,—*Thou knowest, Lord.*

Thou knowest, not alone as God, all-knowing,—
  As man, our mortal weakness Thou hast proved;
On earth, with purest sympathies o'erflowing,
  O Saviour! Thou hast wept, and Thou hast loved!
And love and sorrow still to Thee may come,
And find a hiding-place, a rest, a home.

Therefore I come, Thy gentle call obeying,
  And lay my sins and sorrows at Thy feet,
On everlasting strength my weakness staying,
  Clothed in Thy robe of righteousness complete:
Then rising and refreshed, I leave Thy throne,
And follow on to know as I am known!

H. L. L.

April 10.

MY PSALM.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."—Ps. xxiii. 6.

I MOURN no more my vanished years;
Beneath a tender rain,
An April rain of smiles and tears,
My heart is young again.

The west winds blow, and, singing low,
I hear the glad streams run;
The windows of my soul I throw
Wide open to the sun.

No longer forward, nor behind,
I look in hope or fear,
But, grateful, take the good I find,
The best of now and here.

I break my pilgrim staff, I lay
Aside the toiling oar;
The angel sought so far away
I welcome at my door.

The airs of spring may never play
Among the ripening corn,
Nor freshness of the flowers of May
Blow through the autumn morn,

Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look
  Through fringèd lids to heaven ;
And the pale aster in the brook
  Shall see its image given.

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
  The south wind softly sigh,
And sweet, calm days in golden haze
  Melt down the amber sky……

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
  To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
  Than all my prayers have told.

Enough that blessings undeserved
  Have marked my erring track ;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved
  His chastening turned me back.

That more and more a Providence
  Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
  Sweet with eternal good ;

That death seems but a covered way
  Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
  Beyond the Father's sight ;

That care and trial seem at last,
  Through memory's sunset air,

Like mountain ridges overpast,
In purple distance fair;

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play,
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day.

WHITTIER.

* * *

April 11.

ALONE WITH THEE.

"When I awake, I am still with thee."—"Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?"—"Your life is hid with Christ in God."—Ps. cxxxix. 18; Job xxxi. 4; Col. iii. 3.

INTO my closet fleeing, as the dove
Doth homeward flee,
I haste away to ponder o'er Thy love,
Alone with Thee!

In the dim wood, by human ear unheard,
Joyous and free,
Lord! I adore Thee, feasting on Thy word,
Alone with Thee!

Amid the busy city, thronged and gay,
But One I see;
Tasting sweet peace, as unobserved I pray
Alone with Thee!

Oh, sweetest life! life hid with Christ in God!
So making me
At home, and by the wayside, and abroad,
Alone with Thee!

Prentiss.

* * *

April 12.

GODMINSTER CHIMES.

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."—Acts x. 34, 35.

GODMINSTER! Is it Fancy's play?
I know not, but the word
Sings in my heart, nor can I say
Whether 'twas dreamed or heard;
Yet fragrant in my heart it clings
As blossoms after rain,
And builds of half-remembered things
This vision in my brain.

Through aisles of long-drawn centuries
My spirit walks in thought,

And to that symbol lifts its eyes
  Which God's own pity wrought.
From Calvary shines the altar's gleam,
  The Church's East is there ;
The ages one great minster seem,
  That throbs with praise and prayer.

And all the way from Calvary down,
  The carven pavement shows
Their graves who won the martyr's crown,
  And safe in God repose......
And as the mystic aisles I pace
  By aureoled workmen built,
Lives ending at the Cross I trace
  Alike through grace and guilt......

Moravian hymn and Roman chant
  In one devotion blend,
To speak the soul's eternal want
  Of Him, the inmost Friend.
One prayer soars cleansed with martyr's fire,
  One choked with sinner's tears,—
In heaven both meet in one desire,
  And God one music hears.

While thus I dream, the bells clash out
  Upon the Sabbath air,—
Each seems a hostile faith to shout,
  A selfish form of prayer :

My dream is shattered; yet who knows
  But that in heaven so near
These discords find harmonious close
  In God's atoning ear?

Oh, chime of sweet Saint Charity,
  Peal soon that Easter morn
When Christ for all shall risen be,
  And in all hearts new-born!
That Pentecost when utterance clear
  To all men shall be given,
When all shall say *My brother* here,
  And hear *My son* in heaven!

LOWELL.

* * *

April 13.

"HE LAID HIS HAND UPON ME."

"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."—REV. i. 17.

LAY Thy Hand upon me
  When I fall asleep,
Through the silent hours
  Close beside me keep;
Then the Prince of Darkness,
  Ruler of the air,
Will not dare to touch me,
  If Thy Hand be there.

Lay Thy Hand upon me,
Tenderly restrain
All too eager longings,
Every impulse vain;
Calm my spirit's chafing,
Restless with long care;
Murmurs melt in silence
When Thy Hand is there.

Lay Thy Hand upon me
When I rashly stray
Into paths forbidden,
Choosing my own way.
Ah! how much correction,
Lord, I have to bear!
Yet must take it meekly,
For Thy Hand is there.

Thou didst lead a blind man
In Thine earthly days,
Didst lead him long and gently,
And show him light's pure rays;
Oh, through all life's journey
To its farthest strand,
Surely he remembered
How he clasped that Hand!

Lead me now and always,
Even to the last,

Till the way is ended,
  And the darkness past;
Till I reach the glory
  I was born to share,—
This its crown and centre
  That my Lord is there!

C. M. Noel.

* * *

April 14.

EXPECTATION.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. viii. 32.

When, long ago, I took Thee at Thy word,
  My sins were washed away;
Now for all else I claim Thy promise, Lord,
  As mine for every day!

Be mine the stream from everlasting hills
  Thy Spirit's boundless grace;
Be mine the peace which lowliest temple fills
  Where Thou hast dwelling-place.

Be mine with rich provision to show forth
  The bounty of my King;
Full stores of grace should tell His matchless worth
  Whose royal love I sing.

Oh, for receiving that shall glorify
The Lord whom I implore!
My listening soul entreats Him to draw nigh,
And waits with open door.

Elliott.

* * *

April 15.

TRUE THANKFULNESS.

"My cup runneth over."—"I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies."—Ps. xxiii. 5; Gen. xxxii. 10.

O LOOK, my soul, and see
How thy cup doth overflow!
Think of the love so free
Which fills it for thee so!

Let fall no tears therein
Of self-will or of doubt;
There may be tears for sin,
But sinful tears keep out.

What lies within? Life, health,
Friends—here, or gone before;
Promise of heavenly wealth,
Of earthly, some small store;

Power to act thy part
In earth's great labour-field;

Grace which should make thy heart
  An hundred-fold to yield.

The drops that overflow
  Shine in the morning sun,
And catch the evening glow,
  When each day's work is done.

And if there mingle there
  Some drops of darker hue,
What colour would all bear
  If all were but thy due?

What God's own wisdom planned,
  Is it not right and meet?
Shall aught come from His hand,
  And not to thee seem sweet?

Anon.

* * *

April 16.

THE GLORIOUS THREE.

"Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

FAITH, who sees beyond the portal
  Of far heaven with eagle eyes;
Hope foretasting life immortal;
  Charity, in meekest guise—

Now abide the glorious three,
But the first is Charity.

Faith abideth, there are mountains
  She must day by day remove;
By the fair refreshing fountains
  Hope abideth; and sweet Love
Standeth crowned, the twain between,
Very lowly, yet the queen.

So, in view of things eternal,
  Rocks of time are overhurled;
So, behold, a beauty vernal
  Robes the winter of the world.
But where Charity hath trod
Is the path of very God.

Those shall vanish; she remaineth
  When their work and life are o'er;—
As below, above, she reigneth,
  So she shall reign evermore.
Heaven and earth shall pass away—
Love goes ruling on for aye.

Faith and preaching find an ending,
  Hope and prayer together cease,
Love and praise, together blending,
  Know no changing save increase;
When that cry is past—"How long?"
Love takes up an endless song.

Now the old world is a-dying,—
"Soon," cries Faith, "will Christ appear!"
Hope with rapture is replying,
"Then the reign of Love is near!"
Willing both to fade away,
Star-like, at her perfect day.

Rev. S. J. Stone.

* * *

April 17.

A FAITHFUL SERVANT.

"The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave to every man his work."—Mark xiii. 34.

THAT God hath need of even me, I know:
Afar He plans His palaces, that rise
In stately splendour to the shining skies,
And day by day more grand, more perfect grow;
While I, in life's dark quarries, toiling slow,
Hew the unshapely stones that yet no guise
Of beauty wear to my dim, weary eyes—
'Neath my rude touch no grace or glory show.
Elsewhere shall hands more skilful carve and gild
My rough-hewn blocks, till they are meet to be
A part of those bright walls that He doth build.
Therefore, O soul, be all thy murmurs stilled—
A place to work for Him He giveth thee,
And to thy poor toil immortality.

Spalding.

April 18.

THE EVERLASTING MEMORIAL.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."—Ps. cxii. 6.

UP and away, like the dew of the morning,
Soaring from earth to its home in the sun,
So let me steal away, gently and lovingly,
Only remembered by what I have done.

My name and my place and my tomb all forgotten,
The brief race of time well and patiently run,
So let me pass away, peacefully, silently,
Only remembered by what I have done.

Needs there the praise of the love-written record,
The name and the epitaph graved on the stone?
The things we have lived for, let them be our story,
We ourselves but remembered by what we have done.

I need not be missed, if my life has been bearing
(As its summer and autumn moved silently on)
The bloom, and the fruit, and the seed of its season—
I shall still be remembered by what I have done.

I need not be missed, if another succeed me,
To reap down those fields which in spring I have sown;
He who ploughed and who sowed is not missed by the reaper,
He is only remembered by what he has done.

Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken,—
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages; all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done.
DR. BONAR.

April 19.

PRAISE FOR EARTH'S LESSONS.

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."—GEN. i. 31.

OH, beautiful
Art thou, earth, albeit worse
Than in heaven is called good!......

Praisèd be the mosses soft
In thy forest pathways oft;
And the thorns, that make us think
Of the thornless river-brink
Where the ransomed tread.
Praisèd be thy sunny gleams,
And the storm, that worketh dreams
Of calm unfinishèd.
Praisèd be thine active days,
And thy night-time's solemn need,
When in God's dear Book we read,
No night shall be therein.

Praisèd be thy dwellings, warm
By household fagots' cheerful blaze,
Where, to hear of pardoned sin,
Pauseth oft the merry din,
Save the babe's upon the arm,
Who croweth to the crackling wood.
Yea, and better understood,
Praisèd be thy dwellings cold,
Hid beneath the churchyard mould,
Where the bodies of the saints,
Separate from earthly taints,
Lie asleep, in blessing bound,
Waiting for the trumpet's sound
To free them into blessing, none
Weeping more beneath the sun ;
Though dangerous words of human love
Be graven very near, above.

Earth, we Christians praise thee thus,
Even for the change that comes
With a grief from thee to us ;
For thy cradles and thy tombs,
    For the pleasant corn and wine,
And summer heat,—and also for
The frost upon the sycamore
    And hail upon the vine.

E. B. Browning.

April 20.

GARDENING.

"Thou shalt be like a watered garden."—"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."—ISA. lviii. 11; SONG OF SOL. iv. 16.

SEEST thou yon woodland child,
How, amid flowerets wild,
Wilder himself, he plies his pleasure-task?
That ring of fragrant ground,
With its low woodbine bound,
He claims; no more, as yet, his little heart need ask.

There learns he flower and weed
To sort with careful heed;
He waits not for the weary noontide hour.
There with the soft night air
Comes his refreshing care;
Each tiny leaf looks up, and thanks him for the shower.

Thus faithful found awhile,
He wins the joyous smile
Of friend or parent; glad and bright is he,
When for his garland gay
He hears the kind voice say,
"Well hast thou wrought, dear boy; the garden thine shall be."

And when long years are flown,
And the proud word, Mine own,

Familiar sounds, what joy in field or bower
To view by memory's aid
Again that garden glade,
And muse on all the lore there learned in each bright hour!

Is not a life well spent
A child's play-garden, lent
For Heaven's high trust to train young heart and limb?
When in yon field on high
Our hard-won powers we try,
Will no mild tones of earth blend with the adoring hymn?

Oh, fragrant, sure, will prove
The breath of patient Love,
Even from these fading sweets by memory cast,
As deepening evermore
To Him our song we pour
Who lent us Earth, that He might give us Heaven at last.

Keble, “*Lyra Innocentium.*”

April 21.

“WILT THOU NOT REVIVE US AGAIN?”

“But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.”—“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?”—Ps. lxix. 29; lxxxv. 6.

THE spring-tide hour
Brings leaf and flower,
With songs of life and love;

And many a day
Wears out the lay
In many a leafy grove.
Bird, flower, and tree
Seem to agree
Their choicest gifts to bring;
But this poor heart
Bears not its part,—
In it there is no spring.

Dews fall apace,
The dews of grace,
Upon this soul of sin,
And love divine
Delights to shine
Upon the waste within;
Yes, year by year,
Fruits, flowers, appear,
And birds their praises sing;
But this poor heart
Bears not its part,—
Its winter has no spring.

Lord, let Thy love,
Fresh from above,
Soft as the south wind blow;
Call forth its bloom,
Wake its perfume,
And bid its spices flow!

And when Thy voice
Makes earth rejoice,
And the hills laugh and sing,
Lord ! make this heart
To bear its part,
And join the praise of spring !

MONSELL.

April 22.

THE UNNAMED WOMEN.

"And Jesus said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace."—"And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more."—LUKE vii. 48, 50 ; JOHN viii. 11.

THE hand that might have drawn aside
The veil, which from unloving sight
Those shrinking forms avails to hide,
With tender care has wrapped it tight.

He would not have the sullied name
Once fondly spoken in a home,
A mark for strangers' righteous blame,
Branded through every age to come.

And thus we only speak of them
As those on whom His mercies meet,
"She whom the Lord would not condemn,"
And "She who bathed with tears His feet."

Trusted to no evangelist,
First heard where sins no more defile,
Read from the Book of Life by Christ,
And consecrated by His smile.

Mrs. Charles.

April 23.

FORGIVENESS.

"Jesus said, Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."—Matt. ix. 2; 1 Peter ii. 24.

FORGIVENESS may then yet be mine,
The sinless lips have said "Forgiven;"
Pardon is then a right divine,
And love indeed the law of heaven.

"But can the sullied snow grow white?
What spell can seal the memory fast?
What has been ever must have been,
The Almighty cannot change the past.

"His eyes, though piercing as the light,
In pity may refuse to see;
But what can make my memory white?
What veil can hide myself from me?"

Oh raise thy downcast eyes to His,
And read the blessed secret there;

The pardoning love from guilt that frees,
By loving thee shall make thee fair.……

Thy guilt and shame on Him must lie:
Then search the past thy guilt to see;
Instead, this sight shall meet thine eye,—
Thy Saviour on the cross for thee!

MRS. CHARLES.

* * *

April 24.

"LOVE AS BRETHREN."

"And Joseph said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way."—"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."—GEN. xlv. 24; 1 PETER iii. 8.

FALL not out upon the way;
Short it is, and soon will end;
Better far to fly the fray
Than to lose the friend.

If thy brother seemeth slow,
Jeer not, but thy quickness slack;
Rather than divided go,
Keep the wearier track.

Quit not, as for shorter line,
Ancient ways together trod;
Joy to read at once the sign
Pointing on to God.

Teach each other, as ye walk,
How to sing the angels' song ;
Fill the time with homeward talk,
Then 'twill not be long.

Gently deal with those who roam,
Silent as to wanderings past ;
So, together at your home,
All arrive at last.

Lord Kinloch.

* * *

April 25.

RECONCILED.

"And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other."—"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me......Take Mark, and bring him with thee : for he is profitable to me for the ministry."—Acts xv. 39 ; 2 Tim. iv. 9, 11.

OH ! who shall dare in this frail scene
On holiest, happiest thoughts to lean,
On Friendship, Kindred, or on Love ?
Since not apostles' hands can clasp
Each other in so firm a grasp,
But they shall change and variance prove.

Yet deem not on such parting sad
Shall dawn no welcome dear and glad :
Divided in their earthly race,

Together at the glorious goal,
Each leading many a rescued soul,
The faithful champions shall embrace.

For e'en as those mysterious Four,
Who the bright whirling wheels upbore
By Chebar in the fiery blast,
So, on their tasks of love and praise
The saints of God their several ways
Right onward speed, yet join at last.

And sometimes e'en beneath the moon
The Saviour gives a gracious boon,
When reconcilèd Christians meet,
And face to face, and heart to heart,
High thoughts of holy love impart
In silence meek, or converse sweet.

Companion of the saints! 'twas thine
To taste that drop of peace divine,
When the great soldier of thy Lord
Called thee to take his last farewell,
Teaching the Church with joy to tell
The story of your love restored.

Oh then the glory and the bliss,
When all that pained or seemed amiss
Shall melt with earth and sin away!
When saints beneath their Saviour's eye,
Filled with each other's company,
Shall spend in love the eternal day!

KEBLE.

April 26.

TRAINING.

"Jesus answered and said unto Peter, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."—JOHN xiii. 7.

THE ills we see—
The mysteries of sorrow deep and long,
The dark enigmas of permitted wrong—
Have all one key:
This strange, sad world is but our Father's school;
All chance and change His love shall grandly overrule.

How sweet to know,
The trials which we cannot comprehend
Have each their own divinely purposed end.
He traineth so
For higher learning, ever onward reaching
For fuller knowledge yet, and His own deeper teaching.

He traineth thus,
That we may teach the lessons we are taught;
That younger learners may be further brought,
Led on by us;
Well may we wait, or toil, or suffer long,
For His dear service so to be made fit and strong!

Nor only here
The rich result of all our God doth teach
His scholars, slow at best, until we reach
A nobler sphere;

Then, only then, our training is complete,
And the true life begins for which He made us meet.

Are children trained,
Only that they may reach some higher class?
Only for some few school-room years that pass
Till growth is gained?
Is it not rather for the years beyond
To which the father looks with hopes so fair and fond?

Bold thought, flash on
Into the far depths of eternity!
When Time shall be a faint star-memory
So long, long gone;—
Only not lost to our immortal sight,
Because it ever bears Redemption's quenchless light!

F. R. HAVERGAL.

* * *

April 27.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine....My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life."—JOHN x. 14, 27, 28.

NOT always, Lord, in pastures green
The sheep at noon Thou feedest,
Where in the shade they lie
Within Thy watchful eye;—

Not always under skies serene
  The white-fleeced flock Thou leadest.

On rugged ways, with bleeding feet
  They leave their painful traces;
    Through deserts drear they go,
    Where wounding briers grow,
And through dark valleys, where they meet
  No quiet resting-places.

Not always by the waters still,
  Or lonely wells palm-hidden,
    Do they find happy rest,
    And in Thy presence blest
Delight themselves, and drink their fill
  Of pleasures unforbidden.

Their track is worn on Sorrow's shore
  Where windy storms beat ever,
    Their troubled course they keep
    Where deep calls unto deep;
So going till they hear the roar
  Of the dark-flowing river.

But wheresoe'er their steps may be,
  So Thou their path be guiding,
    Oh be their portion mine!
    Show me the secret sign,
That I may trace their way to Thee,
  In Thee find rest abiding!

Slowly they gather to the fold
Upon Thy holy mountain;
There, resting round Thy feet,
They dread no storm nor heat,
And slake their thirst where Thou hast rolled
The stone from Life's full fountain.

J. D. BURNS.

* * *

April 28.

THE ONLY POSSIBLE.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."—GAL. v. 17.

I CANNOT clear this troubled breast
Of cares, which every day molest;
Only I can remember Thine,
O Saviour, and the less repine.

I cannot drive this sin away,
Which makes me still anew its prey;
I can but to Thy cross repair,
To hear Thee speak my pardon there.

I cannot love as I desire,
With bosom for Thy grace on fire;
I can but view Thy love to me,
And humbled feel, so loved to be.

I cannot rise, as fain I would,
To perfect right, or perfect good;
I can but think of Thee on high,
O Saviour, and be glad to die!

In vain are all my efforts made,
Myself to save, or lift, or aid;
The only possible for me,
O Saviour, is to cling to Thee;

In time of dread, Thy hand to hold;
In loss, Thy charter to unfold;
On Thee to lean, when apt to fall,
And, sought in Thee, in Thee have all.

Lord Kinloch.

* * *

April 29.

THE SHORE OF ETERNITY.

"I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death."—"Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."—"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed: for I am thy God."—Job x. 21; Jer. xxiii. 24; Isa. xli. 10.

ALONE! to land alone upon that shore!
With no one sight that we have seen before,—
Things of a different hue,
And the sounds all new,—
No forms of earth our fancies to arrange,
But to begin alone that mighty change!

Alone! to land alone upon that shore!
Knowing so well we can return no more;
    No voice or face of friend,
    None with us to attend
Our disembarking on that awful strand,
But to arrive alone in such a land!

Alone! to land alone upon that shore!
To begin alone to live for evermore;
    To have no one to teach
    The manners or the speech
Of that new life, or put us at our ease,—
Oh that we might die in pairs or companies!

Alone? No! God hath been there long before,
Eternally hath waited on that shore
    For us who were to come
    To our eternal home;
And He hath taught His angels to prepare
In what way we are to be welcomed there.

Alone? The God we trust is on that shore,
The Faithful One whom we have trusted more,
    In trials and in woes,
    Than we have trusted those
On whom we leaned most in our earthly strife,—
Oh, we shall trust Him more in that new life!

Alone? The God we love is on that shore,
Love not enough, yet whom we love far more,

And whom we've loved all through,
And with a love more true
Than other loves; yet we shall love Him more—
True love of Him begins upon that shore!

So not alone we land upon that shore;
'Twill be as though we had been there before;
We shall meet more we know
Than we can meet below,
And find our rest, like some returning dove,
And be at home at once with our Eternal Love!

FABER.

* * *

April 30.

THE PILGRIMS AT HOME.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."—REV. vii. 15.

HAPPY the souls released from fear
And safely landed there!
Some of the shining number once I knew,
And sojourned with them here.
Nay some, my elder brethren now,
Set later out for heaven, my junior saints below.
Long after me they heard the call of grace
Which waked them unto righteousness;—
How have they got beyond!
Converted last, yet first with glory crowned!

Little once I thought that these
Would first the summit gain,
And leave me far behind, slow journeying o'er the plain.

Loved while on earth, nor less beloved though gone,
Think not I envy you your crown!
No, if I could, I would not call you down!
Though slower is my pace, to you I'll follow on,
Leaning on Jesus all the way.
The shinings of His grace,……
The sweet unveilings of His face,
Make me, at times, near half as blest as you!

TOPLADY.

May 1.

WONDERS OF DAY AND NIGHT.

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all."—Ps. civ. 24.

SO wide, so richly stored
Thy universe, O Lord!
We need a double view,
Each night and morning new.

Behold the sun arise—
What glories meet our eyes!
Around, on either hand,
What forms of beauty stand!
This wondrous earth of ours,
Its forests and its flowers,
The rivers rushing free,
The mountains and the sea—
We say, with one accord,
Great are Thy works, O Lord!
Who can the whole explore,
Or trace from shore to shore?

Now comes the silent night:
One scene is lost to sight;
Another, strange and new,
Shines in the vault of blue.
Star rises after star,
Worlds gleaming from afar!
We cry, with one accord,
Great are Thy works, O Lord!
And filled with deep amaze,
In silence still we gaze,
Bewildered by the thought
Of all our God hath wrought.
Oh, when the soul would soar
These regions to explore,
Amid the starry host
How thought itself is lost!

Yet mindless, unimpressed,
How many near us rest,
Within the misty round
In which themselves are found!
But *we*, with glad accord,
Extol Thy name, O Lord!
And trace below, above,
Thy wisdom and Thy love.

From the German of Lange.
(*Tr.* H. L L.)

May 2.

REUNION.

"If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—1 THESS. iv. 14.

GOD does not give us new flowers every year:
When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,—
The violet is here!

It all comes back,—the odour, grace, and hue;
Each sweet relation of its life repeated:
No blank is left, no longing-for is cheated;
It is the thing we knew.

So after the death-winter must it be—
God will not set strange signs in heavenly places;
The old love will look out from the old faces;—
My own! I shall have thee!

S. A. R.

* * *

May 3.

"I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATT. xi. 28.

"WE are so tired," we say; our eyelids ache
With wistful longing for the kingdom fair;

When shall the glory of the morning break
Across the shadows? when shall we awake
To perfect knowledge of the fulness there?
Oh for one look on Him, our King confessed,
That, seeing, we might rest!......

"So tired!" we say; our hearts are wearied sore,
Bowed with the weight of their own weaknesses;
We make them strong for warfare as of yore,
And suddenly a waif from memory's store,
A night of stars, a spring dawn's tenderness,
Unbinds our strongholds, till by pain oppressed
We can but plead for rest.

Is there no answer? Hark, the voice of One
Whose eyes look through eternity, yet keep
All their remembrance of earth's watchings lone;
Whose burnished feet through all the ages gone
Have worn the scars of pain once graven deep;
Whose yearning heart thrills through its fond request,
"Come unto Me, and rest!

"Oh, sorrowing eyes that wait the distant years
When doubtful paths shall all be understood,
Mine have seen further than your utmost fears,
I, too, have sorrowed even unto tears,
Nay, mingled with the night-dews drops of blood;—
I plead with you by all My love confessed,
Come unto Me, and rest!

"Oh, weary feet that all too soon have known
Such restless aching, Mine was greater yet;
I climbed the awful Calvary steps as One
Treading the winepress there alone, *alone*,
That through the anguish on that pathway set
For you might shine this haven sweet and blest—
Come unto Me, and rest!......

"Here and hereafter! oh, beloved of old,
God's afterward, though infinite it be,
Such wealth of blessings thought can scarcely hold,—
This one, o'erflowing from My love untold,
I fain would give to all who come to Me,
Here and hereafter; oh, redeemed and blest,
Come unto Me, and rest!"

MARY ROWLES.

* * *

May 4.

REST.

"We which have believed do enter into rest."—"The Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear."—HEB. iv. 3; ISA. xiv. 3.

REST, weary soul!
The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,
For all thy sins full satisfaction made;
Strive not thyself to do what Christ has done,
Claim the free gift, and make the joy thine own.

No more by pangs of guilt and fear distrest,
Rest, sweetly rest!

Rest, weary heart!
From all thy silent griefs and secret pain,
Thy profitless regrets, and longings vain;
Wisdom and love have ordered all the past,
All shall be blessedness and light at last;
Cast off the cares that have so long opprest,—
Rest, sweetly rest!

Rest, weary head!
Lie down to slumber in the peaceful tomb;
Light from above has broken through its gloom.
Here, in the place where once thy Saviour lay,
Where He shall wake thee on a future day,
Like a tired child upon its mother's breast,
Rest, sweetly rest!

Rest, spirit free!
In the green pastures of the heavenly shore,
Where sin and sorrow can approach no more;
With all the flock by the Good Shepherd fed,
Beside the streams of life eternal led,
For ever with thy God and Saviour blest,—
Rest, sweetly rest!

H. L. L.

From "Thoughtful Hours."

May 5.

MORNING IN SPRING.

"As the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds."—2 SAM. xxiii. 4.

HOW nature wakes around!
How the low rays of light
Glitter in dew-drops bright!
What music in each sound;—
Streams in their silver flow,
Birds warbling clear and low,—
And now, behold the monarch of the skies,
In his full glory, from his eastern couch arise!

How fresh this fragrant air!
New life to all it brings,
As if from hidden springs,
And I with nature share;
Through every pulse I feel
New life, new vigour steal:
Oh that my soul with yon light clouds could fly,
Above all beauty here, to its great Source on high!

Yes, all has come from Thee,
Lord of all power and might!
To chaos' silent night
Thou spakest—"Let there be!"
And, answering to each name,
Light, life, and beauty came.

And still the work of power does love maintain,
Revive, renew, through all Thy universal reign.

At length a morn shall come,
When the last "Let there be!"
Is spoken—and we see
This earth a glorious home,
A temple, where no sin
Nor death shall enter in,
Where Christ's redeemèd ones, serenely blest,
In the new heavens and earth for ever safe shall rest.

And now things fair and bright
Are shadows, sent before,
Of better things in store,
When these have sunk in night.
Pass, shadows of to-day!
Bright visions, fade away!
We mourn you not—let planets disappear,
When the red glowing east proclaims the Sun is near.

For me that Sun shall rise;—
And loved ones, mourned in vain,
Its light shall bring again
To bless my longing eyes.
Then faint not, drooping heart,
Ours is the better part;
Bloom on, fair Nature! fading are thy flowers,
But things which perish not, in Christ are surely ours.

RUDOLPH STIER.

May 6.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—1 JOHN iv. 10.

O LOVE of God, how strong and true!
Eternal, and yet ever new,
Uncomprehended and unbought,
Beyond all knowledge and all thought!

O love of God, how deep and great!
Far deeper than man's deepest hate;
Self-fed, self-kindled like the light,
Changeless, eternal, infinite!......

O wide-embracing, wondrous love,
We read thee in the sky above,
We read thee in the earth below,
In seas that swell and streams that flow!

We read thee in the flowers, the trees,
The freshness of the fragrant breeze,
The song of birds upon the wing,
The joy of summer and of spring.

We read thee best in Him who came
To bear for us the cross of shame,
Sent by the Father from on high,
Our life to live, our death to die......

O love of God, our shield and stay
Through all the perils of our way!
Eternal love, in thee we rest,
For ever safe, for ever blest!

DR. BONAR.

May 7.

THE BROOK.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."—"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."—"They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."—MATT. vi. 19; COL. iii. 2; PS. xxxiv. 10.

FAIR stream of the peaceful valley,
  Murmuring soft and low,
Have they robbed thee of all thy treasures,
  That thou art wailing so?

Ah! what pictures of perfect beauty
  Once in thy calm mirror slept!—
The graceful birches and alders,
  The willow that waved and wept,—

The cool, deep-shaded places,
  Where the wild-fowl loved to rest,—
The squirrel among the branches,
  The linnet low in her nest!

But the sound of axe and hatchet
  Came down the quiet dell;

Then the birch and the alder vanished,
  The willow sighed and fell.

Now all is bare and dreary ;—
  Over the cold gray stone
Thou goest, mourning and seeking
  For loved companions gone.

Yet see !—the blue heaven is mirrored
  There, where the shadows lay ;
The moon and the stars at midnight,
  The glorious sun by day.

Flow on thy course to the ocean,
  Fair stream, and lament no more !
Thou hast gained more abiding treasures
  Than all those possessed before.

I, too, may pursue my journey,
  And lament not nor repine,—
What matter though Earth be lonely,
  If Heaven at last be mine !

META HEUSSER. (Free translation.)
From "Alpine Lyrics."

* * *

May 8.

THE CHURCH'S SONG.

"My beloved is mine, and I am his."—SONG OF SOL. ii. 16.

I AM Thine ; I stand before Thee,
  Jesus, evermore Thine own ;

Not by merit, but by glory
 Of Thy grace, elect alone;
  Thy beloved,
 Unto men and angels shown.

Thou art mine; I did not choose Thee,
 Only came when Thou didst call;
Now, oh never let me lose Thee,
 From Thy favour never fall!
  My Beloved,
 First and Last, and all in all!

I am Thine; Thy word remaineth,
 That no creature, far or nigh,
Where the lord of evil reigneth
 In deep hell or haunted sky,
  Shall for ever
 Part of love the mystic tie.

Thou art mine; although Thy vision
 Fills not yet my longing sight,
Though the doubting world's derision
 Holds my honour in despite,—
  Mine in darkness,
 Surely as at last in light!

I am Thine; in tribulation
 From Thy parted heavens above
Comes divinest consolation,
 Lighting as the Holy Dove,

With the message
Of Thine everlasting love.

Thou art mine; in bliss and sorrow,
In the shade as in the shine;
Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
To the age of ages,—mine.
Yea, my Master,
Mine Thou art, for I am Thine!

Rev. S. J. Stone.

May 9.

THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve."
Matt. xxvi. 20.

AROUND a Table, not a Tomb,
He willed our gathering to be,
When, going to prepare our home,
Our Saviour said, "Remember Me."

We kneel around no sculptured stone,
Marking the place where Jesus lay;
Empty the tomb, the angels gone,
The stone for ever rolled away.

The sculptured stone is for the dead,—
Thy three dark days of death are o'er;
Thou art the Life, the living Head,
Our living Light for evermore.

Of no fond relics sadly dear,
O Master, are Thine own possest,
The crown of thorns, the cross, the spear,
The purple robe, the seamless vest.

Nay! relics are for those who mourn
The memory of an absent friend;
Not absent Thou, nor we forlorn—
Art Thou not with us to the end?

Then round Thy Table, not Thy Tomb,
We keep Thy sacred feast with Thee,
Until within the Father's home
Our endless gathering-place shall be.

Mrs. Charles.

May 10.

ASCENSION DAY.

"While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."—Acts i. 9.

HE is gone! beyond the skies
A cloud receives Him from our eyes.
Gone beyond the highest height
Of mortal gaze or angel's flight;
Through the veils of time and space
Passed into the holiest place,—
All the toil, the sorrow done,
All the battle fought and won……

He is gone! and we remain
In this world of sin and pain;
In the void which He has left,
On this earth, of Him bereft,
We have still His work to do,
We can still His path pursue,
Seek Him both in friend and foe,
In ourselves His image show.

He is gone! but we once more
Shall behold Him as before,
In the heaven of heavens the same
As on earth He went and came.
In the many mansions there,
Place for us He will prepare;
In that world unseen, unknown,
He and we may yet be one.

He is gone! but not in vain;
Wait until He comes again.
He is risen! He is not here;
Far above this earthly sphere,
Evermore, in heart and mind,
There our peace in Him we find;
To our own eternal Friend
Thitherward let us ascend.

DEAN STANLEY.

May 11.

THE ASCENDED SAVIOUR.

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."—LUKE xxiv. 51.

HAIL the day that sees Him rise,
Ravished from our wishful eyes!
Christ, awhile to mortals given,
Re-ascends His native heaven.
There for Him high triumph waits:
Lift your heads, eternal gates!
Wide unfold the radiant scene!
Take the King of Glory in!

Circled round with angel powers,
Their triumphant Lord and ours,
Conqueror over death and sin,
Take the King of Glory in!
Him though highest heaven receives,
Still He loves the earth He leaves;
Though returning to His throne,
Still He calls mankind His own.

See! He lifts His hands above;
See! He shows the prints of love:
Hark! His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on His Church below;
Still for us His death He pleads;
Prevalent, He intercedes;

Near Himself prepares our place,—
Harbinger of human race.

Lord, though parted from our sight,
High above yon azure height,
Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Following Thee beyond the skies.
There we shall with Thee remain,
Partners of Thine endless reign;
There Thy face unclouded see,
Find our heaven of heavens in Thee!

C. Wesley.

May 12.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

"If a man die, shall he live again?"—"Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and the life."—Job xiv. 14; John xi. 25.

BREEZES of spring, all earth to life awaking,—
Birds swiftly soaring through the sunny sky,—
The butterfly its lonely prison breaking,—
The seed upspringing, which had seemed to die,—

Types such as these a word of hope have spoken,
Have shed a gleam of light around the tomb;
But weary hearts longed for a surer token,
A clearer ray, to dissipate its gloom.

And this was granted! See the Lord ascending,
On crimson clouds of evening calmly borne,
With hands outstretched, and looks of love still bending
On His bereaved ones, who no longer mourn.

"I am the resurrection," hear Him saying;
"I am the life; He who believes in Me
Shall never die,—the souls My call obeying,
Soon, where I am, for evermore shall be."

Sing Hallelujah! light from heaven appearing,
The mystery of life and death is plain;
Now to the grave we can descend unfearing,
In sure and certain hope to rise again!

UNBEKANNTES. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

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May 13.

LOSSES.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—MATT. xvi. 26.

UPON the white sea-sand
There sat a pilgrim band,
Telling the losses that their lives had known,
While evening waned away
From breezy cliff and bay,
And the strong tides went out with weary moan.

One spake, with quivering lip,
Of a fair-freighted ship,
With all his household, to the deep gone down.
But one had wilder woe
For a fair face, long ago,
Lost in the darker depths of a great town!

There were who mourned their youth
With a most loving truth,
For its brave hopes and memories ever green;
And one upon the West
Turned an eye that would not rest
For far-off hills whereon its joy had been.

Some talked of vanished gold,
Some of proud honours told,
Some spake of friends that were their trust no more,
And one of a green grave,
Beside a foreign wave,
That made him sit so lonely on the shore.

But when their tales were done,
There spake among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free—
"Sad losses have ye met;
But mine is heavier yet,
For a believing heart is gone from me."

"Alas!" those pilgrims said,
"For the living and the dead,

For fortune's cruelty, for love's sure cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea!
But, howe'er it came to thee,
Thine, stranger, is life's last and heaviest loss."

Frances Browne.

May 14.

JOY IN BELIEVING.

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 Tim. i. 12.

HALLELUJAH! I believe!
Now the giddy world stands fast;
Now my soul has found an anchor
Till the night of storm is past.
All the gloomy mists are rising,
And a clue is in my hand,
Through earth's labyrinth to guide me
To a bright and heavenly land.

Hallelujah! I believe!
Sorrow's bitterness is o'er,
And affliction's heavy burden
Weighs my spirit down no more.
On the cross the mystic writing
Now revealed before me lies,
While I read the words of comfort,
"As a father, I chastise."

Hallelujah! I believe!
  Now no longer on my soul
All the debt of sin is lying,—
  One great Friend has paid the whole!
Ice-bound fields of legal labour
  I have left, with all their toil;
While the fruits of love are growing
  From a new and genial soil.

Hallelujah! I believe!
  Now life's mystery is gone;
Gladly through its fleeting shadows,
  To the end I journey on.
Through the tempest, or the sunshine,—
  Over flowers or ruins led,
Still the path is *homeward* hasting,
  Where all sorrow shall have fled.

Hallelujah! I believe!
  Now, O Love, I know thy power;
Thine no false or fragile fetters,
  Not the rose-wreaths of an hour!
Christian bonds of holy union,
  Death itself does not destroy;
Yes, to live, and love for ever,
  Is our heritage of joy!

HEINRICH MÖWES.

May 15.

CONTRASTED PRAYERS.

"And Jonah wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live."—"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." —JONAH iv. 8; LUKE xix. 13.

TWO hands upon the breast,
And labour's done!
Two pale feet crossed in rest,—
The race is won.

Two eyes with coin-weight shut,
And all tears cease;
Two lips where grief is mute
And wrath at peace!

So pray we oftentimes, mourning our lot;
God, in His kindness, answereth not.

Two hands for work addressed
Aye for His praise,—
Two feet that never rest,
Walking His ways;

Two eyes that look above
Still, through all tears;
Two lips that breathe but love,
Nevermore fears!
So cry we afterwards, low on our knees;
Pardon *those* erring prayers; Father! hear these!

ANON.

May 16.

THE VINEYARD LABOURER.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard,...and said unto them, Go ye into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way."—MATT. xx. 1, 4.

I ASK not freedom, Lord,
But that Thy grace afford
Strength for the task Thou giv'st on earth to do;
And, when with toil oppressed,
Some short and broken rest,
From which to start, and straight my work pursue.

My days an hireling's are,
And one from home afar;—
The hire Thy grace bestows I ask not here.
I am content, O Lord,
That Thou the whole shouldst hoard,
And pay at once, the home I reach to cheer.

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

May 17.

WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil......singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."—EPH. v. 16, 19.

THE woman singeth at her spinning-wheel
A pleasant chant, ballad or barcarolle;
She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,

Far more than of her flax, and yet the reel
Is full, and artfully her fingers feel
With quick adjustment, provident control,
The lines, too subtly twisted to unroll,
Out to a perfect thread. I hence appeal
To the dear Christian Church—that we may do
Our Father's business in these temples mirk,
Thus swift and steadfast, thus intent and strong;
While thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue
Some high, calm spheric tune, and prove our work
The better for the sweetness of our song.

E. Barrett Browning.

* * *

May 18.

BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS.

"From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?"—"He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."—Mark viii. 4; Ps. cvii. 9.

Go not away, thou weary soul:
Heaven has in store a precious dole
Even on Bethsaida's cold and darksome height,
Where over rocks and sands arise
Proud Sirion in the northern skies,
And Tabor's lonely peak, 'twixt thee and noon-day light.

And far below, Gennesaret's main
Spreads many a mile of liquid plain
(Though all seem gathered in one eager bound),

Then narrowing cleaves yon palmy lea,
Towards that deep sulphureous sea
Where five proud cities lie, by one dire sentence drowned.

Landscape of fear! yet, weary heart,
Thou need'st not in thy gloom depart,
Nor fainting turn to seek thy distant home:
Sweetly thy sickening throbs are eyed
By the kind Saviour at thy side;
For healing and for balm e'en now thine hour is come.

No fiery wing is seen to glide,
No cates ambrosial are supplied,
But one poor fisher's rude and scanty store
Is all He asks (and more than needs)
Who men and angels daily feeds,
And stills the wailing sea-bird on the hungry shore.

The feast is o'er, the guests are gone,
And over all that upland lone
The breeze of eve sweeps wildly as of old—
But far unlike the former dreams,
The heart's sweet moonlight softly gleams
Upon life's varied view, so joyless erst and cold.......

So when the tones of rapture gay
On the lorn ear die quite away,
The lonely world seems lifted nearer heaven:
Seen daily, yet unmarked before,
Earth's common paths are strown all o'er
With flowers of pensive hope, the wreath of man forgiven.

The low sweet tones of Nature's lyre
No more on listless ears expire,
Nor vainly smiles along the shady way
The primrose in her vernal nest,
Nor unlamented sink to rest
Sweet roses one by one, nor autumn leaves decay.

There's not a star the heaven can show,
There's not a cottage-hearth below,
But feeds with solace kind the willing soul—
Men love us, or they need our love;
Freely they own, or heedless prove
The curse of lawless hearts, the joy of self-control.

Then rouse thee from desponding sleep,
Nor by the wayside lingering weep,
Nor fear to seek Him further in the wild,
Whose love can turn earth's worst and least
Into a conqueror's royal feast:
Thou wilt not be untrue, thou shalt not be beguiled.

KEBLE.

* * *

May 19.

THE BOY WITH THE FIVE LOAVES.

"There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"—JOHN vi. 9.

WHAT time the Saviour spread His feast
For thousands on the mountain's side,

One of the last and least
The abundant store supplied.

Haply, the wonders to behold,
A boy mid other boys he came,
A lamb of Jesus' fold,
Though now unknown by name.

Or for his sweet obedient ways
The Apostles brought him near, to share
Their Lord's laborious days,
His frugal basket bear.......

Well may I guess how glowed his cheek,
How he looked down, half pride, half fear;
Far off he saw one speak
Of him in Jesus' ear.

"There is a lad—five loaves hath he,
And fishes twain;—but what are they
Where hungry thousands be?"
Nay, Christ will find a way.

In order, on the fresh green hill
The mighty Shepherd ranks His sheep
By tens and fifties, still
As clouds when breezes sleep.

Oh, who can tell the trembling joy,
Who paint the grave, endearing look,
When from that favoured boy
The wondrous pledge He took?

Keep *thou*, dear child, thine early word;
Bring Him thy best: who knows but He
For His eternal board
May take some gift of thee?......

KEBLE, "*Lyra Innocentium.*"

* * *

May 20.

THE GUIDING PILLAR.

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."—Ex. xiii. 21, 22.

THE "Exodus" was only the beginning
Of countless tender mercies by the way;
God went before the people He had chosen
With fire by night, and in a cloud by day.

He took it not away, that cloudy Pillar,
Although they oft provoked Him so to do;
Ungrateful though they were for all His kindness,
That Pillar led them all their journey through......

Just what they needed! Wonderfully fitted
To meet the varying wants of every hour;
But oh, how little did they prize the token
Of His unerring Wisdom, Love, and Power!

God's leadings often crossed their inclinations;—
The Pillar went too fast, or went too slow;

It stayed too long to suit their restless temper,
Or when they wished to stay it bade them go.

It kept them so uncertain of the future!
It wrote "if God permit" on every plan;
It seemed to mock the wisdom of the wisest,
And made a child of every full-grown man……

And so they murmured,—murmured very often;
Their sullen hearts rebelled against the light:
Had not their God been strong and very patient,
They never would have found their way aright.

"Now these things happened to them for ensamples,"
We find them "written for our learning" here.
O Israel! Israel! how can *I* condemn thee?
Thy condemnation were my own, I fear!

Yet, God of Israel, do not Thou condemn me!
Oh do not answer any wilful prayer!
But lead me safely to the land of promise,
To heaven itself, and I will praise Thee there!

Author of "The Old, Old Story."

May 21.

TRUSTING OUR GUIDE.

"For thy name's sake lead me, and guide me."—Ps. xxxi. 3.

I KNOW not the way I am going,
But well do I know my Guide;

With a childlike trust I give my hand
To the mighty Friend at my side.
The only thing I say to Him
As He takes it is—"Hold me fast!
Suffer me not to lose my way,
And bring me home at last!"

As often the weary wanderer
Alone in a stranger land,
Tells the guide his destined place of rest,
And leaves all else in his hand,—
So 'tis home, 'tis home, we fain would reach!
He who guides us may choose our way;
Little we reck what path we take,
If nearer home each day!

Douglas.

* * *

May 22.

THE GOOD FIGHT.

"So fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—1 Cor. ix. 26; Eph. vi. 12.

I CAME, and saw, and hoped to conquer,
As the great Roman once had done;
His was the one hour's torrent shock of battle,
My field was harder to be won.

I came and saw, but did not conquer,—
The foes were fierce, their weapons strong;

I came, I saw, but yet I did not conquer—
For me the fight was sore and long.

They said the war was brief and easy—
A word, a look, would crush the throng;
To some it may have been a moment's conflict,
To me it has been sore and long.

And yet I know that I shall conquer,
Though sore and hard the fight may be;
I know, I know I shall be more than victor,
Through Him who won the fight for me.

I fight, not fearful of the issue,
My victory now sure and near;
Yet not the less with hand and eye all watchful
Grasp I my buckler and my spear.

For I must fight, if I would conquer,—
'Tis not by flight that fields are won;
And I must conquer, if I would inherit
The victor's joy, and crown, and throne.

Dr. Bonar.

May 23.

DUTIES AND TRIALS.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."—
Ps. lv. 22.

EACH trial has its weight, which whoso bears
Knows his own woe and need of succouring
The martyr's hope half wipes away the trace [grace:

Of flowing blood; the while life's humblest cares
Smart more, because they hold in Holy Writ no place.

This be my comfort, in these days of grief
Which is not Christ's, nor forms heroic tale—
Apart from Him if not a sparrow fail,
May He not pitying view, and send relief
When foes or friends perplex, and peevish thoughts prevail?

Then keep good heart; nor take the self-wise course
Of Thomas, who must see ere he would trust.
Faith will fill up God's word, not poorly just
To the bare letter, heedless of its force,
But walking by its light amid earth's sun and dust.

NEWMAN.

* * *

May 24.

COMPENSATION.

"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other."—ECCLES. vii. 14.

OH the compensating springs! Oh the balancings of life,
Hidden away in the workings under the seeming strife!
Slowing the fret and the friction, weighting the whirl and the force,
Evolving the truest power from each unconscious source.

How shall we gauge the whole, who can only guess a
part?
How can we read the life, when we cannot spell the
heart?
How shall we measure another, we who can never know
From the juttings above the surface the depth of the
vein below?

Even our present way is known to ourselves alone,
Height and abyss and torrent, flower and thorn and
stone;
But we gaze on another's path as a far-off mountain
scene,
Scanning the outlined hills, but never the vales between.

Ah! if we knew it all we should surely understand
That the balance of sorrow and joy is held with an even
hand,
That the scale of success or loss shall never overflow,
And that *compensation* is twined with the lot of high
and low.

Then hush! oh, hush! for the Father knows what thou
knowest not,
The need and the thorn and the shadow linked with
the fairest lot;
Knows the wisest exemption from many an unseen
snare,
Knows what will keep *thee* nearest, knows what thou
couldst not bear.

Hush ! oh, hush ! for the Father portioneth as He will
To all His beloved children; and shall they not be still?
Is not His will the wisest, is not His choice the best?
And in perfect acquiescence is there not perfect rest?

Hush ! oh, hush ! for the Father, whose ways are true and just,
Knoweth and careth and loveth, and waits for thy perfect trust;
The cup He is slowly filling shall soon be full to the brim,
And infinite compensations for ever be found in Him.

Hush ! oh, hush ! for the Father hath fulness of joy in store,
Treasures of power and wisdom, and pleasures for evermore;
Blessing and honour and glory, endless infinite bliss ;—
Child of His love and His choice, oh, canst thou not wait for this?

F. R. HAVERGAL.

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May 25.

DIVINE COMPASSION.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."—Ps. ciii. 13, 14.

WHAT can we do, with whom the unbeholden
Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope?

What but look sunward, and with faces golden
  Speak to each other softly of a hope?

Can it be true, the grace He is declaring?
  Oh let us trust Him, for His words are fair!
Then, what is this, and why art thou despairing?
  God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

Truly He cannot, after such assurance,
  Truly He cannot, and He will not fail;
Nay, they are known, the hours of thine endurance,
  Daily thy tears are added to the tale.

Not as one blind and deaf to our beseeching,
  Neither forgetful that we are but dust,
Not as from heavens too high for our up-reaching,
  Coldly sublime, intolerably just,—

Nay, but Thou knowest us, Lord Christ, Thou knowest!
  Well Thou rememberest our feeble frame,
Thou canst conceive our highest and our lowest,
  Pulses of nobleness, and aches of shame.

Then though our sad and limitless transgression
  Grows with our growing, with our breath began,
Raise Thou the arms of endless intercession,
  Jesus, divinest when Thou most art man!

F. W. H. MYERS.

May 26.

THE TWO SIDES.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."—James v. 11.

A GLOOMY cross stood on the path I trod,
I needs must lift it would I onward go;—
On it was written clear, "*The Will of God.*"
Gazing, I wept and trembled, bending low.

For much I dreaded what might be behind,
Till Faith came forward, with her words of cheer,
"Why weepest thou, O thou of doubtful mind?
Arise and take thy cross! What dost thou fear?"

She raised me up and pointed, when, behold!
The cross that terrified had passed away,
And there, with "*Love*" inscribed in burnished gold,
Another stood, which shone resplendently.

Awhile I carried it, with wondering awe;
Its glory shone, a light upon my road;
Till looking at the other side, I saw
The words which I had feared,—"*The Will of God.*"

I looked at Faith; she smiled,—"I did but move
The cross around and show the other name;
Behind the Will there always lies the Love:
The Will and Love with God are but the same.

"Thou wast afraid of what thou didst not see;—
They are most blessed, and they best fulfil
God's gracious purpose for them perfectly,
Who trust the unseen Love, and do the Will."

CLARA A. TUCKETT.

May 27.

DEPARTED FRIENDS.

"The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."—REV. xxii. 3, 4.

THEY are all gone into a world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here!
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth cheer.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which the hill is drest
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory
Whose light doth trample on my days;
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays......

Dear, beauteous death, the jewel of the just!
Shining nowhere but in the dark;

What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know
At first sight if the bird be flown;
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined within a tomb,
Her captive flames must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up gave room,
She'd shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under Thee!
Resume my spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty!

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass,
Or else remove me hence into that hill
Where I shall need no glass.

VAUGHAN.

May 28.

CATHEDRAL HYMN.

"Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."—"O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."—Isa. lvi. 7; Ps. lxv. 2.

FATHER, which art on high!
Weak is the melody
Of harp or song to reach Thine awful ear,
Unless the heart be there,
Winging the words of prayer,
With its own fervent faith or suppliant fear.

What griefs that make no sign,
That ask no aid but Thine,
Father of mercies! here before Thee swell!
As to the open sky,
All their dark waters lie
To Thee revealed, in each close bosom cell.

The sorrow for the dead,
Mantling its lonely head
From the world's glare, is in Thy sight set free;
And the fond aching love
Thy minister, to move
All the wrung spirit, softening it for Thee.

And doth not Thy dread eye
Behold the agony
In that most hidden chamber of the heart,

Where darkly sits remorse,
Beside the secret source
Of fearful visions, keeping watch apart?

How dreadful is this place!
The glory of Thy face
Fills it too searchingly for mortal sight;
Where shall the guilty flee?
Over what far off sea?
What hills, what woods may shroud him from that light?

Not to the cedar shade
Let his vain flight be made;
Nor the old mountains, nor the desert sea;
What but the Cross can yield
The hope, the stay, the shield?
Thence may the Atoner lead him up to Thee!

* * * *

And if amidst the throng,
Linked by the ascending song,
There are, whose thoughts in trembling rapture soar,
Thanks, Father! that the power
Of joy, man's early dower,
Thus, even midst tears, can fervently adore!

Thanks for each gift divine!
Eternal praise be Thine,
Blessing and love, O Thou that hearest prayer!

Let the hymn pierce the sky,
And let the tombs reply!
For seed, that waits the harvest-time, is there!

Mrs. Hemans.

* * *

May 29.

"BRING AN OFFERING."

"Bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."—Ps. xcvi. 8, 9.

HOLY offerings, Lord, we bear,
Offerings of praise and prayer.
Purer life, and purpose high,
Claspèd hands, uplifted eye,
Lowly acts of adoration
To the God of our salvation—
On Thine altar laid we leave them:
Christ, present them! God, receive them!

Promises in sorrow made,
Left, alas! too long unpaid;
Fervent wishes, anxious thought,
Never into action wrought—
Long withheld, we now restore them,
On Thy holy altar pour them,
There in trembling faith to leave them:
Christ, present them! God, receive them!

Brighter joys and tenderer tears,
Firmer faith, more faithful fears,
Lowlier penitence for sin,
More of Christ our souls within;
Love, which when its life was newer,
Burned within us deeper, truer,—
Lost too long, while we deplore them,
Jesus, plead for—God, restore them!

To the Father, and the Son,
And the Spirit, Three in One,
Though our mortal weakness raise
Offerings of imperfect praise,
Yet with hearts bowed down most lowly,
Crying, Holy, Holy, Holy!
On Thine altar laid we leave them:
Christ, present them! God, receive them!

ANON

* * *

May 30.

THE LAST SNOW ON BEN MORE.

"Praise the Lord from the earth...fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word."—Ps. cxlviii. 7, 8.

STILL it lingers, lingers yonder, in that long ravine's dark shade,
With its depths by ancient earthquake and rent precipices made,
Which no eye of living creature, save the eagle's, has surveyed.

Still the snow-wreath lingers yonder,—while we breathe this summer air,
Seeking shelter in the birch-wood from the noontide's burning glare,
All around us life and sunshine, singing birds and blossoms fair.

All is sunshine in the valley, summer reigns in earth and sky,—
Yet a strange attraction draws me to those mountain cliffs on high,
Looking up at their memento of the winter storms gone by.

And I think of midnight tempests, blinding drift and sullen roar,
Leaving wrecks of desolation far and wide on sea and shore—
Leaving yonder icy footprint on the forehead of Ben More!

And I think of storms yet wilder, which through human hearts have passed,—
With their wrecks of early promise, broken vows and hopes o'ercast,
Leaving desolated traces, in all future life to last.

Who knows not some secret sorrow, some long silent fount of tears,
Hid in Memory's desert places, and when all else calm appears,
Springing up with sudden freshness, through the mists of parted years?

And the higher, nobler natures, longest, deepest, will retain
Traces left by early conflict, by youth's bitter grief and pain.
Gone the snows from lesser mountains—on Ben More they still remain!

But I feel that all around me in the valley seems more fair,
All the brighter is the sunshine, and more soft the summer air,
When I look up to the mountain, and the storm memento there.

And the peace must be the sweetest given by Jesus to His own,
When it reigns within a bosom which has weary conflicts known,
Looking back to days of darkness, and on idols overthrown!

Shall it be so still hereafter, in His presence when we stand,
Fear and sorrow far behind us, one united, ransomed band,
Yet recalling each the journey through the stormy pilgrim land?

Leave the past—and trust the future to our Father's heart of love;
Forward, onward, more His mercy and His faithfulness to prove!
Ebenezer! Ebenezer! labour here and rest above!

H. L. L.

May 31.

THE DAY OF DEATH.

"It is appointed unto men once to die."—"This day I am going the way of all the earth."—HEB. ix. 27; JOSHUA xxiii. 14.

THOU inevitable day,
When a voice to me shall say,
"Thou must rise and come away;
All thine other journeys past,
Gird thee, and make ready fast
For thy longest and thy last."

Day, deep hidden from our sight
In impenetrable night,
Who may guess of thee aright?
Art thou distant, art thou near?
Wilt thou seem more dark or clear?
Day with more of hope or fear?

Wilt thou come, not seen before
Thou art standing at the door,
Saying light and life are o'er?
Or with such a gradual pace
As shall leave me largest space
To regard thee face to face?

Shall I lay my drooping head
On some loved lap, round my bed
Prayers be made, and tears be shed?

Or, at distance from my own,
Name and kin alike unknown,
Make my solitary moan?

Will there yet be things to leave,
Hearts to which this heart must cleave,
From which parting, it must grieve?
Or shall life's best ties be o'er,
And all loved ones gone before
To that other happier shore?

Shall I gently fall on sleep,
Death like slumber o'er me creep,
Like a slumber sweet and deep?
Or the soul long strive in vain
To get free, with toil and pain,
From its half-divided chain?

Little skills it where or how,
If thou comest then or now,
With a smooth or angry brow,—
Come thou must, and we must die.
Jesus, Saviour, stand Thou by
When that last sleep seals our eye!

R. C. TRENCH.

June 1.

TWO GATES.

"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray."—"Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening."—Ps. lv. 17; civ. 23.

OPEN the East Gate now,
  And let the day come in—
The day with unstained brow,
  Untouched by care or sin.
For her we watch and wait,
  Wait for the birds and dew;—
Open the Eastern Gate,
  And let the daylight through.

Uplift thy daily toil
  With brain as fresh and clear,
Strong hands that have no soil,
  And heart untouched by fear.
Marching unto thy noon,
  Marching unto thy west,—
When shadows lengthen, soon
  Comes calm and peaceful rest.

Open the Western Gate,
  And let the daylight go,
In pomp and royal state,
  In rose and amber glow.
It is so late, so late,—
  The birds sing sweet and low;
Open the Western Gate,
  And let the daylight go!

Lay down thy daily toil,
  Glad of thy labour done,
Glad of the night's assoil,
  Glad of thy wages won.
With hearts that fondly wait,
  With grateful hearts aglow,
Pray at the Western Gate,
  And let the daylight go.

Pray at the Eastern Gate,
  For all the day can ask ,
Pray at the Western Gate,
  Holding thy finished task.
It waxeth late, so late,
  The night falls cold and gray ;—
But through Life's Western Gate
  Dawns Life's Eternal Day.

MARY A. BARR.

June 2.

MORNING THOUGHTS.

"Thou makest the outgoings of the morning to rejoice."—"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."—Ps. lxv. 8; Eccles. xi. 7.

THE summer sun is shining
Upon a world so bright!
The dew upon each grassy blade,
The golden light, the depth of shade,
All seem as they were only made
To minister delight.

From giant trees, strong branchèd,
And all their veinèd leaves;
From little birds that madly sing;
From insects fluttering on the wing;
Ay, from the very meanest thing,
My spirit joy receives.

I think of angel-voices
When the birds' songs I hear;
Of that celestial City, bright
With jacinth, gold, and chrysolite,
When, with its blazing pomp of light,
The morning doth appear!

I think of that great River
That from the Throne flows free;

Of weary pilgrims on its brink,
Who, thirsting, have come down to drink ;—
Of that unfailing Stream I think,
When earthly streams I see.

I think of pain and dying
As that which is but nought,
When glorious morning, warm and bright,
With all its voices of delight,
From the chill darkness of the night,
Like a new life, is brought.

I think of human sorrow
But as of clouds that brood
Upon the bosom of the day,
And the next moment pass away ;
And with a trusting heart I say,
"Thank God, all things are good !"

Mary Howitt.

June 3.

THE HILLS AT SUNRISE.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart."—Deut. viii. 2.

O ROSY hills, I know you ! did I not travel o'er you,
And painfully explore you, with sad, reproachful eyes ?

I've trod your dreary spaces, your steep and toilsome places,
I wonder that I know you now, enwrapped in fair sunrise!

I strove to pass beyond you, but still ye rose before me,
Your shadows darkening o'er me from dim and cloudy skies;
With many a painful stumble ye taught me to be humble,
But still ye kept me climbing on to meet the fair sunrise.

And now that I have crossed you, I look on you in wonder;—
What valley, wrapped in thunder, within your bosom lies?
Yet long ago I knew it, in darkness I came through it,
The same that seems so rosy now, entranced in fair sunrise.

But ye were always friendly, though long ye did enthral me,
Though oft ye did appal me, and cost me many sighs.
With lofty brows still hoping, ye stood while I was groping;
And now my brow is rosy too, lit up with fair sunrise!

A few more toilsome climbings, and clouds of thund'rous thickness,
A little more heart-sickness, beneath Love's pitying eyes;

Then sunny hands will cover the past with light all
over—
I know that I shall see it all in golden-fair sunrise!

If earth is made so lovely by tips of sunny fingers,
If every cloud that lingers must light a grand surprise,
Till every piled-up storey calls glory unto glory—
Oh, who shall paint the heavenly hills in Love's divine
sunrise!

MRS. MERRYLEES.

June 4.

PRAYER.

"Lord, teach us to pray."—LUKE xi. 1.

WHEN prayer delights thee least, then learn
to say,
"Soul, now is greatest need that thou shouldst pray."

* * * *

But what is prayer, when it is prayer indeed?
The mighty utterance of a mighty need.

The man is praying, who doth press with might
Out of his darkness into God's own light.

White heat the iron in the furnace won,
Withdrawn from thence 'tis hard and cold anon.

The greenest leaf divided from its stem,
To speedy withering doth itself condemn.

The largest river from its fountain-head
Cut off, leaves soon a parched and dusty bed.

All things that live from God their sustenance wait,
And sun and moon are beggars at His gate.

All skirts extended of thy mantle hold,
When angel-hands from heaven are scattering gold.
R. C. Trench.

* * *

June 5.

DISMISS ME NOT.

"O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee...Give thy strength unto thy servant."—Ps. lxxxvi. 2, 16.

DISMISS me not Thy service, Lord,
But train me for Thy will;
For even I in fields so broad
Some duties may fulfil;
And I will ask for no reward,
Except to serve Thee still.

How many serve, how many more
May to the service come!
To tend the vines, the grapes to store,
Thou dost appoint for some;
Thou hast Thy young men at the war,
Thy little ones at home.

All works are good, and each is best
As most it pleases Thee;
Each worker pleases when the rest
He serves in charity;
And neither man nor work unblest
Wilt Thou permit to be.

Our Master all the work has done
He asks of us to-day;—
Sharing the service, every one
Share, too, His sonship may.
Lord, I would serve and be a son,—
Dismiss me not, I pray!

T. T. LYNCH.

* * *

June 6.

THE ROYALLEST GIFT.

"And Jesus looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all."—LUKE xxi. 1–3.

LONG centuries since, in the Rhine-land,
There reigned a valorous king,
Who, out of his war-won treasures,
Vowed unto his Lord to bring

Some token of fair requital;—
"A fane," he said, "that shall seem

In its marvel of stone-work frostings,
Like the cunningest craftsman's dream.

"I'll lavish my rich abundance
With open, unreckoning hand;
And still be the richest monarch
That rules in this Western land.

"Albeit from base to roof-cope
My grandeur shall mark the whole,
There still is the unseen rubble
My vassals have leave to dole.

"Then hearken and heed, good people!
Bring hither your tithings all,
For I will reject no pittance
Ye offer, howe'er so small."

Thereafter the work went forward
Right nobly; and each did bring
Out of their meagre hoardings
Some slenderest offering.

As the statued walls rose skyward,
And blossoms bloomed out from stone,
It chanced that a rude-clad woman
As she watched, one day, made moan,—

"If one of these workers love Thee
As I,—Thou, Lord, dost know!
And yet I am empty-handed
Of witness to prove it so!

"Even yonder the straining oxen
That drag at the heavy beam,
Are toiling in Thy sweet service ;—
How spent with their work they seem !

"Dear Lord, since for *Thee* they labour,
Hard-wrought on the king's highway,
What hinders that I should give them
The corn I have gleaned to-day !"

When, grand in its towered glory,
The beautiful minster shone,
The eyes of the wondering people
Saw graved on a mystic stone

The name of "the royallest giver"
Whose largess had crowned the fane.
Behold ! 'twas an unknown woman's !
And they searched for the king's in vain.

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

* * *

June 7.

SUNDAY EVENING.

"Call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord."—"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."—ISA. lviii. 13; REV. i. 10.

'TIS Sunday eve in summer's sweetest time,
The sun just sinking 'neath the purple hills ;
A strange, hushed calm my inmost spirit fills
As here I listen to the old church-chime……

Surely all nature owns the Sabbath hour,
Else why this peace so sweetly hovering round,
This silence, eloquent, yet so profound,
That holds us in its deep, mysterious power?

O Evening flushed with gladness! how I love
Thy peaceful benediction! like the dew
Baptizing earth, and making all things new,
Thou liftest lower thoughts and hopes above!

I think of Eden and its sinless bowers,
Of God Himself walking in cool of day,
Where yet no trail of deadly serpent lay,
And gladdening Adam through the restful hours.

I think of Joseph's garden, and its cave
Rock-hewn, from whence the mighty Conqueror rose,
The Lord of life, who vanquished all our foes,
And flung a ray of brightness o'er the grave!

But most I think me of that sunlit shore
Where tempests beat not, and no shadows fall;
Where God and His dear love are all in all,
And we shall falter, sin, and weep no more.

That Rest remaineth; yet these days of peace
Are foretastes sweet of that glad Home above,
Where all His, perfected in light and love,
At last shall meet, and every sigh shall cease.

Lord of the Sabbath! whom our hearts adore,
Accept the feeble anthem of our praise,
And fit us holier, loftier hymns to raise
In Thy great Temple—blest for evermore!

Rev. R. H. Baynes.
From "Lyra Anglicana."

* * *

June 8.

THE LITTLE WHITE ROSE.

"Be content with such things as ye have."—"Godliness with contentment is great gain."—Heb. xiii. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 6.

It was peeping through the brambles—
That little, wild, white rose,
Where the hawthorn hedge was planted
My garden to enclose.
All beyond was fern or heather,
On the breezy open moor;
All within was sun and shelter,
And the wealth of beauty's store.
But I did not heed the fragrance
Of floweret or of tree,
For my eyes were on that rosebud,
And it grew too high for me.

In vain I strove to reach it,
Through the tangled mass of green,—

It only smiled and nodded
  Behind its thorny screen.
Yet through that summer morning
  I lingered near the spot;
Oh! why do things look sweeter
  If we possess them not?
My garden buds were blooming,
  But all that I could see
Was that mocking little white rose
  Hanging—just too high for me!

So, in life's wider garden,
  There are buds of promise too,
Beyond our reach to gather,—
  But not beyond our view;
And like the little charmer
  That tempted me astray,
They steal out half the brightness
  Of many a sunny day.
Oh! hearts that fail with longing
  For some forbidden tree,
Look up and learn a lesson
  From my white rose and me!

'Tis wiser far to number
  The blossoms at our feet,
Than ever to be sighing
  For just one bud more sweet.
My sunbeams and my shadows
  Fall from a piercèd Hand;

I can better trust His wisdom
  Since His heart I understand.
And maybe in the morning
  When His blessed face I see,
He will tell me why my white rose
  Grew just too high for me!

ANON.

* * *

June 9.

UNDER THE DESERT TREE.

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life...And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat."—1 KINGS xix. 4, 5.

UNDER the desert tree the fainting prophet lies,
  With weary heart and spirit, with heavy, closing eyes;
All the low west horizon glows with departing day,
And hope and life seem sinking, like sunset-light, away.

"It is enough, O Lord! now may the conflict cease!
The weary struggle over, let me depart in peace!
From cruel, fell pursuers, I can no longer flee—
Recall the life Thou gavest, I yield it up to Thee!

"It is enough, O Lord! enough of toil and pain,
Of bitter disappointment, of hopes deferred and vain.

Yes, willingly I laboured; but now the end has come,
The evening shadows lengthen—call the tired servant
home!"

Under the desert tree—oh! many a drooping head
Has rested, since the prophet's, beneath that longed-for
shade;
And many a weary spirit Elijah's God has heard
Repeat in sad despondence, "It is enough, O Lord!"

But He who changeth not, the same for evermore,
Is still the God of mercy and compassion as of yore;
And still His angel messengers are sent to soothe and
bless,
As to the sleeping prophet in the lone wilderness.

Under the desert tree—O man of God, not *there*
Should end thy mortal journey according to thy prayer!
The car of flame, the angel-guards, thy dim eyes could
not see;
Yet was that triumph waiting, another day, for thee!

Elijah's God, and ours! look with a pitying eye
On us, Thy feeble servants, and hear us when we cry!
Thou knowest all our sorrows, Thou hearest every moan,
When in the desert places we sink and weep alone.

The journey is too great—we are too weak and frail;
We faint in disappointments, and faith and courage fail.
Give us the Living Water, the Bread of Life, again,
For all our work and warfare to strengthen and sustain!

O Christ, forsake us not! revive us with Thy grace!
Then shall we run with patience the whole appointed race;
And a new song of praise and trust shall yet ascend to Thee,
When Thou hast met and blessed us—under the desert tree!

H. L. L.

* * *

June 10.

"ARISE AND EAT."

"And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him [Elijah], and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee."—1 KINGS xix. 7.

CHRISTIAN, did no one, thinkest thou, behold thee,
What time thou faintedst in the noonday heat?
Heardst thou no angel's voice, which sweetly told thee,
"The journey is too great; arise and eat."

An angel's voice? Nay, 'twas thy God that spake it,
In sweeter tones than angel could repeat;
Himself the Food, His own the Hands that brake it,
His own the words that bade thee "Rise and eat;

"This is the Bread of Life which came from heaven,
And now for thee is on My table spread;
This is My Body, which for thee was given,
And this My Blood, which for thy sins was shed."

O fainting, faltering wanderer, art thou able
Still to refuse thy suppliant God's request?—
"Be filled, ye hungry, from My bounteous table;
And come, ye weary, I will give you rest."

Oh, may His gracious, oft-urged invitation
Subdue thee with its tones so soft and sweet;
Mayst thou, at length, with heartfelt adoration,
And tearful penitence, arise and eat.

Another banquet is for thee preparing;
Another feast thy longing eyes shall greet;—
An angel's voice shall break thy rest, declaring,
"Behold, all things are ready; rise and eat!"

ANON.

* * *

June 11.

THE CRUSE THAT FAILETH NOT.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—ACTS xx. 35.

IS thy cruse of comfort wasting? rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and thy brother;

Love divine will fill thy storehouse, or thy handful still renew;
Scanty fare for one will often make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving; all its wealth is living grain;
Seeds, which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain.

Is thy burden hard and heavy? do thy steps drag wearily?
Help to bear thy brother's burden; God will bear both it and thee.

Numb and weary on the mountains, wouldst thou sleep amidst the snow?
Chafe that frozen form beside thee, and, together, both shall glow.

Art thou stricken in life's battle? many wounded round thee moan;
Lavish on their wounds thy balsams, and that balm shall heal thine own.

Is the heart a well left empty? None but God its void can fill;
Nothing but a ceaseless Fountain can its ceaseless longings still.

Is thy heart a living power? self-entwined, its strength sinks low;
It can only live in loving, and by serving love will grow.

MRS. CHARLES.

June 12.

CHEERFULNESS.

"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."—Ps. xxxi. 24.

I THINK we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed, beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon gray blank of sky, we might grow faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls; but since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous heart, be comforted!
And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road,
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said,
"Because the way is *short*, I thank Thee, God!"

E. Barrett Browning.

June 13.

ONE BY ONE.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—Matt. vi. 34.

ONE by one the sands are flowing,
One by one the moments fall;

Some are coming, some are going,—
Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each;
Let no future dreams elate thee,
Learn thou first what these can teach.

One by one, bright gifts from Heaven,
Joys are sent thee here below;
Take them readily when given,
Ready, too, to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,
Do not fear an armèd band;
One will fade as others reach thee,
Shadows passing through the land.

Do not look at life's long sorrow,
See how small each moment's pain;
God will help thee for to-morrow,
Every day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its task to do or bear;
Luminous the crown and holy,
If thou set each gem with care.

Do not linger with regretting,
Or for passing hours despond;

Nor, the daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token
Reaching heaven; but one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken
Ere the pilgrimage be done.

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

June 14.

SATISFIED.

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."—"My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."—Ps. xvii. 15; JER. xxxi. 14.

THERE is a land, where every pulse is thrilling
With rapture earth's sojourners may not know;
Where heaven's repose the weary heart is stilling,
And peacefully life's time-tossed currents flow.

Far out of sight, while yet the flesh infolds us,
Lies the fair country where our hearts abide;
And of its bliss is naught more wondrous told us
Than these few words,—"I shall be satisfied."

Satisfied! satisfied! the spirit's yearning
For sweet companionship with kindred minds,

The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration which no language finds,—

Shall they be satisfied?—the soul's vague longing,—
The aching void which nothing earthly fills?
Oh, what desires upon my soul are thronging
As I look upward to the heavenly hills!

Thither my weak and weary feet are tending;—
Saviour and Lord, with Thy frail child abide!
Guide me toward home, where, all my journey ending,
I shall behold Thee, and "be satisfied!"

Anon.

* * *

June 15.

KINDRED HEARTS.

"The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."—"Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not."—Prov. xiv. 10; xxvii. 10.

OH! ask not, hope not thou too much
Of sympathy below;
Few are the hearts whence the same touch
Bids the sweet fountains flow.
Few—and by still conflicting powers
Forbidden here to meet—
Such ties would make this life of ours
Too fair for aught so fleet.

It may be that thy brother's eye
  Sees not as thine, which turns
With such deep reverence to the sky,
  Where the rich sunset burns;
It may be that the breath of spring,
  Born amidst violets lone,
A rapture o'er thy soul can bring—
  A dream, to his unknown.

The tune that speaks of other times—
  A sorrowful delight!
The melody of distant chimes,
  The sound of waves by night,
The wind, that with so many a tone
  Some chord within can thrill—
These may have language all thine own,
  To *him* a mystery still.

Yet scorn thou not, for this, the true
  And steadfast love of years;
The kindly, that from childhood grew,
  The faithful to thy tears!
If there be one that o'er the dead
  Hath in thy grief borne part,
And watched in sickness by thy bed,—
  Call his a kindred heart.

But for those bonds all perfect made
  Wherein bright spirits blend,

Like sister flowers of one sweet shade,
With the same breeze that bend,
For that full bliss of thought allied,
Never to mortals given,—
Oh! lay thy lovely dreams aside,
Or lift them unto heaven.

Mrs. Hemans.

* * *

June 16.

THE TWO ALABASTER BOXES.

"And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."—"And there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head."—Luke vii. 37, 38; Mark xiv. 3.

When Thou, in patient ministry,
Didst pass a stranger through Thy land,
Two costly gifts were offered Thee,
And each was from a woman's hand.

To Thee, who madest all things fair,
Twice fair and precious things they bring—
Pure, sculptured alabaster clear;
Perfumes, for earth's anointed King.

Man's hasty lips would both reprove,—
One for the stain of too much sin—

One for the waste of too much love;
  Yet both availed Thy smile to win.

The saint who listened at Thy feet,
  The sinner sinners scorned to touch,
Adoring in Thy presence meet,
  Both pardoned, and both loving much.

Thus evermore to all they teach
  Man's highest style is "much forgiven,"
And that earth's lowest yet may reach
  The highest ministries of heaven.

They teach that gifts of costliest price
  From hearts sin-beggared yet may pour;
And that love's costliest sacrifice
  Is worth the love, and nothing more.

MRS. CHARLES.

* * *

June 17.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—PHIL. iv. 7.

WE ask for peace, O Lord!
  Thy children ask Thy peace;
Not what the world calls rest,
  That toil and care should cease,

That through bright, sunny hours,
Calm life should fleet away,
And tranquil night should fade
In smiling day,—
It is not for such peace that we would pray.

We ask for peace, O Lord!
Yet not to stand secure,
Girt round with iron pride,
Contented to endure,
Crushing the gentle strings
That human hearts should know,
Untouched by others' joy
Or others' woe;
Thou, O dear Lord, wilt never teach us so.

We ask Thy peace, O Lord!
Through storm, and fear, and strife,
To light and guide us on
Through a long, struggling life,
While no success or gain
Shall cheer the desperate fight,
Or nerve what the world calls
Our wasted might,—
Yet pressing through the darkness to the light.

It is Thine own, O Lord,
Who toil while others sleep;
Who sow with loving care
What other hands shall reap;

They lean on Thee entranced
In calm and perfect rest,—
Give us that peace, O Lord,
Divine and blest,
Thou keepest for those hearts who love Thee best!

Adelaide Procter.

* * *

June 18.

"I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."—Luke vii. 47.

WEARY of earth, and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven and long to enter in;
But there no evil thing may find a home,
And yet I hear a voice that bids me come.

So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

The while I fain would tread the heavenly way,
Evil is ever with me day by day;
Yet on mine ears the gracious tidings fall,
"Repent, confess, thou shalt be loosed from all."

It is the voice of Jesus that I hear;
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near,

And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.

'Twas He who found me on the deathly wild,
And made me heir of heaven, the Father's child,
And day by day, whereby my soul may live,
Gives me His grace of pardon, and will give.

O great Absolver, grant my soul may wear
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer,
That in the Father's courts my glorious dress
May be the garment of Thy righteousness!

Yea, Thou wilt answer for me, righteous Lord!
Thine all the merits, mine the great reward;
Thine the sharp thorns, and mine the golden crown;
Mine the life won, and Thine the life laid down.

Nought can I bring, dear Lord, for all I owe,
Yet let my full heart what it can bestow;
Like Mary's gift let my devotion prove,
Forgiven greatly, how I greatly love.

Rev. S. J. Stone.

* * *

June 19.

THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."—Ps. cxvi. 7.

We journey in a vale of tears;
But often from on high

The glorious bow of God appears,
  And brightens all our sky.
Then through the breaking clouds of heaven
  Far distant visions come,
And sweetest words of grace are given
  To cheer the pilgrim home.

Then doubt and darkness flee away,
  And shadows all are gone,—
Oh, if such moments would but stay,
  This earth and heaven were one!
Too soon the vision is withdrawn,—
  There's only left, "He saith;"
And I, a lonely pilgrim, turn
  To live and walk by faith.

Yet, even for glimpses such as these,
  My soul would cheerful bear
All that in darkest days it sees—
  The toil, the pain, the care.
For through the conflict and the race,
  Whatever grief my lot,
When Jesus shows His gracious face
  All troubles are forgot.

My quickened soul, in faith and love,
  Mounts up on eagles' wings,
And at the City gates above
  Exulting sits and sings!

'Tis through Thy sufferings, O my Lord,
I hope that world to see,
And through these gates, at Thy sweet word,
To enter in to Thee!

Anon.

* * *

June 20.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."—Rev. xxii. 1.

THERE is a pure and tranquil wave
That rolls around the throne of love,
Whose waters gladden as they lave
The peaceful shores above.

While streams, which on that tide depend,
Steal from these heavenly shores away,
And on this desert world descend,
O'er weary lands to stray.

The pilgrim faint, and nigh to sink
Beneath his load of earthly woe,
Refreshed beside their verdant brink
Rejoices in their flow.

There, O my soul, do thou repair,
And hover o'er the hallowed spring,
To drink the crystal wave, and there
To lave thy wearied wing.

There droop that wing, when far it flies
From human care, and toil, and strife,
And feed by those still streams that rise
Beneath the Tree of Life.

It may be that the breath of love
Some leaves on their pure tide have driven,
Which, passing from the shores above,
Have floated down from heaven.

So shall thy wounds and woes be healed
By the blest virtue that they bring,
So thy parched lips shall be unsealed
Thy Saviour's praise to sing!

William Ball.

June 21.

THE BOOK.

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—2 Tim. iii. 15.

GALLERY of sacred pictures manifold,
A minster rich in holy effigies,
And bearing on entablature and frieze
The hieroglyphic oracles of old.
Along its transept aureoled martyrs sit;
And the low chancel side-lights half acquaint
The eye with shrines of prophet, bard, and saint,
Their golden tablets traced in holy writ!

But only when on form and word obscure
Falls from above the white supernal light,
We read the mystic characters aright,
And light informs the silent portraiture,
Until we pause at last, awe-held, before
The one ineffable Face, love, wonder, and adore.

WHITTIER.

* * *

June 22.

THANKFULNESS.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving."—Ps. cxvi. 12, 17.

LORD, in this dust Thy sovereign voice
First quickened love divine;
I am all Thine, Thy care and choice—
My very praise is Thine.

I praise Thee, while Thy providence
In childhood frail I trace,
For blessings given, ere dawning sense
Could seek or scan Thy grace;

Blessings in boyhood's marvelling hour,
Bright dreams and fancies strange;
Blessings, when reason's awful power
Gave thought a bolder range.

Blessings of friends, which to my door
Unasked, unhoped, have come;

And choicer still, a countless store
Of eager smiles at home.

Yet, Lord, in memory's fondest place
I shrine those seasons sad,
When, looking up, I saw Thy face
In kind austereness clad.

I would not miss one sigh or tear,
Heart-pang, or throbbing brow;
Sweet was the chastisement severe,
And sweet its memory now.

Yes! let the fragrant scars abide,
Love-tokens in Thy stead,
Faint shadows of the spear-pierced side,
And thorn-encompassed Head.

NEWMAN.

June 23.

"LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."—"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God."—JOHN ii. 5; PS. cxliii. 10.

MY Master and my Lord!
I long to do some work, some work for Thee;
I long to bring some lowly gift of love,
For all Thy love to me!

The harvest fields are white,—
Send me to gather there some scattered ears;
I have no sickle bright, but I can glean,
And bind them in with tears.

I would not choose my work;
The field is Thine, my Father and my Guide.
Send Thou me forth, oh! send me where Thou wilt,
So Thou be glorified!

I need Thy strength, O Lord,
I need the quiet heart, the subject will;
I need the patient faith that "makes no haste,"
The love that follows still.

And, if Thou wilt not send,
Then take my will, and bend it to Thine own,
Till, in the peace no restless thought can break,
I wait, with Thee alone.

The darkness is not light,—
The "chastening is not joy;"—it is Thy word,
O Saviour, one with us in tears and pain,
Our Brother and our Lord.

Yet choose Thou still for me;—
The harvest toil, amid the noon-day heat,
Where I may gather fruit that shall not die,
And lay it at Thy feet,—

Or the slow, silent hours,
When I must wait, and suffer, and be still,
And, in the patience which I learn from Thee,
Accept Thy perfect will.

H. Bowman.

* * *

June 24.

"FAITHFUL AND TRUE."

"Buy the truth, and sell it not."—"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."—"Be strong and of a good courage: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."—Prov. xxiii. 23; Eph. vi. 14; Joshua i. 9.

SPEAK thou the truth. Let others fence
And trim their words for pay;
In pleasant sunshine of pretence
Let others bask their day.

Guard thou the fact, though clouds of night
Down on thy watch-tower stoop,
Though thou shouldst see thine heart's delight
Borne from thee by their swoop.

Face thou the wind, though safer seem
In shelter to abide,—
We were not made to sit and dream,
"The rope must first be tried."

Where God hath set His thorns about,
Cry not, "The way is plain."

His path within for those without
  Is paved with toil and pain.

Show thou thy light. If conscience gleam,
  Set not the bushel down;
The smallest spark may send its beam
  O'er hamlet, tower, or town.

Be true to every honest thought,
  And as thy thought thy speech.
What thou hast not by suffering bought
  Presume thou not to teach.

Hold on, hold on! thou hast the Rock,
  Thy foes are on the sand;
The first world-tempest's ruthless shock
  Scatters their shifting strand,

While each wild gust the mist shall clear
  We now see darkly through,
And justified at last appear
  The Truth, in Him that's True.

Alford.

* * *

June 25.

REMEMBER ME.

"This do in remembrance of me."—Luke xxii. 19.

When the Paschal evening fell
  Deep on Kedron's hallowed dell,

When around the festal board
Sat the Apostles with their Lord,
Then His parting word He said,
Blessed the cup and broke the bread—
"This whene'er ye do or see,
Evermore remember Me."

Years have passed; in every clime,
Changing with the changing time,
Varying through many forms,
Torn by factions, racked by storms,
Still the sacred table spread,
Flowing cup and broken bread
With that parting word agree—
"Drink and eat; remember Me."

When by treason, doubt, unrest,
Sinks the soul, dismayed, opprest;
When the shadows of the tomb
Close us round with deepening gloom;
Then bethink us at that board
Of the sorrowing, suffering Lord,
Who, when tried and grieved as we,
Dying, said, "Remember Me."......

When diverging creeds shall learn
Towards their central Source to turn;
When contending churches tire
Of the earthquake, wind, and fire;

Here let strife and clamour cease
At that still, small voice of peace—
"May they all united be,
In the Father and in Me."

When, as rolls the sacred year,
Each fresh note of love we hear;
When the Babe, the Youth, the Man,
Full of grace divine we scan;
When the mournful way we tread
Where for us His blood He shed,—
When on Easter morn we tell
How He conquered Death and Hell;
When we watch His Spirit true
Heaven and earth transform anew,—
Then with quickened sense we see
Why He said, "Remember Me."

Dean Stanley.

* * *

June 26.

FROM "CŒLO TEGITUR QUI NON HABET URNAM."

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."—Rev. xiv. 13.

AT noon-tide came a voice, "Thou must away;—
Hast thou some look to give, some word to say,
Or hear, of fond farewell?"—I answered, "Nay,

"My soul hath said its farewell long ago,—
How light, when summer comes, the loosened snow
Slides from the hills! yet tell me, *where I go*,

"*Doth any wait for me?*" Then like the clear
Full drops of summer rain, that seem to cheer
The skies they fall from, soft within mine ear,

And slow, as if to render through that sweet
Delay a blest assurance more complete,
"Yea," only "yea," was whispered me, and then
A silence that was unto it, Amen.

"Doth any love me there," I said, "or mark
Within the dull, cold flint the fiery spark
One moment flashing out into the dark?

"My spirit glowed, yet burned not to a clear
Warm, steadfast flame, to lighten or to cheer!"—
The sweet voice said, "By things which do appear

"We judge amiss. The flower which wears its way
Through stony chinks, lives on from day to day,
Approved for *living*, let the rest be gay

"And sweet as summer! Heaven within the reed
Lists for the flute-note, in the folded seed
It sees the bud, and in the Will the Deed."

Dora Greenwell.

June 27.

RESURRECTION.

"God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."—Eph. ii. 6.

NOT alone the victors free
Standing by the Crystal Sea
Sing the song of victory!
Buried are Thine own with Thee,
Risen are Thine own with Thee!
We may share it, even we.

One our life with those above,
One our service, one our love;
Not at death that life begins,
Though a fuller strength it wins,
Freed from all that bounds its flight,
Freed from all that cramps its might.

We upon these lower slopes,
Dim with fears, and fitful hopes,—
They upon the eternal heights,
Glorious in undying lights,
Radiant in the cloudless sun;—
Yet their life and ours is one,
Yet on us their Sun hath shone,
Yet for us their Day begun.

And these lowly paths we tread,
Are the same where they were led;

Very sacred grown and sweet,
Trodden by immortal feet,—
Trodden once, oh best of all!
By the Feet at which they fall.

And each service kind and true
Which to any here we do,
Linked in one immortal chain
Makes their service live again—
Brings us to the service nigh
Which they render now, on high;
For the highest heavens above
Nothing higher know than love.

Mrs. Charles.

* * *

June 28.

LINES WRITTEN OFF MADEIRA. (1879.)

"Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."—"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."—Mark vi. 50; Ps. cvii. 30.

OUR ship had anchored near the land,—
On deck, pale, woeworn figures come,
Where stands a happy little band
Of fair young children, going home.

Dark their green island seemed to be,
And wild the surf that beat its strand;
But more than this the children see—
To them it is familiar land.

The lightnings flashed, and torrents fell ;
But now a friend they loved had come,
And clustering round, the children tell
How glad they are at getting home.

Scarce trembling at the storm, they wait,
Till gently lowered to the bark
Which was to bear its precious freight
Across that sea, so wild, so dark.

In vain *we* strove, by sight or sound,
To catch their welcome on the shore ;
Only the billows boomed around,
And lightnings flickered as before.

Thus may God's children, when the close
Of this their stormy life has come,
Forget its sickness and its woes
In the deep joy of going Home.

As, one by one, they launch away,
To hear their welcome home we long,—
And sometimes, on a summer day,
We catch the echo of a song !

O glorious and eternal Home !
Though far off, ever keep in sight,
That I may know thee when I come,
Be it in darkness, storm, or night !

O blessed Jesus, let my heart
Upon Thy face such welcome see,
That when from ship and friends I part
I may rejoice to sail with Thee!

S. L. F.

June 29.

THE DEATH OF A BELIEVER.

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands."—ACTS xii. 7.

THE Apostle slept—a light shone in the prison,—
An angel touched his side.
"Arise," he said; and quickly he hath risen,
His fettered arms untied.

The watchers saw no light at midnight gleaming,—
They heard no sound of feet;
The gates fly open, and the saint still dreaming
Stands free upon the street.

So, when the Christian's eyelid droops and closes
In Nature's parting strife,
A friendly angel stands where he reposes
To wake him up to life.

He gives a gentle blow, and so releases
The spirit from its clay;

From sin's temptations, and from life's distresses,
He bids it come away.

It rises up, and from its darksome mansion
It takes its silent flight,
And finds its freedom in the large expansion
Of heavenly air and light.

Behind, it hears Time's iron gates close faintly,—
It now is far from them,
For it has reached the City of the saintly,
The New Jerusalem.

A voice is heard on earth of kinsfolk weeping
The loss of one they love;
But he is gone where the redeemed are keeping
A festival above.

The mourners throng the ways, and from the steeple
The funeral bell tolls slow;
But on the golden streets the holy people
Are passing to and fro,

And saying as they meet, "Rejoice! another,
Long waited for, is come!
The Saviour's heart is glad, a younger brother
Hath reached the Father's home!"

J. D. Burns.

June 30.

THE FAMILY IN EARTH AND HEAVEN.

"The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."—EPH. iii. 14, 15.

COME, let us join our friends above,
  Who have obtained the prize,
And on the eagle-wings of love
  To joys celestial rise.
Let saints on earth unite to sing
  With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King
  In earth and heaven are one.

One family, we dwell in Him,
  One Church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
  The narrow stream, of death.
One army of the living God,
  To His command we bow;
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
  And part are crossing now.

What numbers to their endless home
  This solemn moment fly!
And we are to the margin come
  And we expect to die;
His militant embodied host,
  With wishful looks we stand,

And long to see that happy coast,
  And reach that heavenly land.

Our old companions in distress
  We haste again to see,
And eager long for our release
  And full felicity:
Even now by faith we join our hands
  With those that went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
  On the eternal shore.

Our spirits, too, shall quickly join,
  Like theirs with glory crowned,
And shout to see our Captain's sign,
  And hear His trumpet sound.
O that we now may grasp our Guide!
  Then, when the word is given,
Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,
  And land us safe in heaven!

C. WESLEY.

July 1.

HEART VENTURES.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—PROV. xxvii. 1; REV. ii. 10.

I STOOD and watched my ships go out,
  Each, one by one, unmooring free,
What time the quiet harbour filled
  With flood-tide from the sea.

The first that sailed,—her name was Joy;
  She spread a smooth and ample sail,
And eastward strove, with bending spars,
  Before the singing gale.

Another sailed,—her name was Hope;
  No cargo in her hold she bore,
Thinking to find in western lands
  Of merchandise a store.

The next that sailed,—her name was Love;
  She showed a red flag at the mast,—
A flag as red as blood she showed,
  And she sped south right fast.

The last that sailed,—her name was Faith;
Slowly she took her passage forth,
Tacked and lay to—at last she steered
A straight course for the north.

My gallant ships they sailed away
Over the shimmering summer sea;
I stood at watch for many a day,
But only one came back to me.

For Joy was caught by Pirate Pain;
Hope ran upon a hidden reef;
And Love took fire, and foundered fast
In 'whelming seas of grief.

Faith came at last, storm-beat and torn;
She recompensed me all my loss,
For as a cargo safe she brought
A Crown, linked to a Cross!

Anon.

* * *

July 2.

THE SHADOW OF THE ROCK.

PART I.

"A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—Isa. xxxii. 2.

THE shadow of the Rock! Stay, pilgrim, stay!
Night treads upon the heels of day;
There is no other resting-place this way.

The Rock is near,
The well is clear—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! The desert wide
Lies round thee like a trackless tide,
In waves of sand forlornly multiplied.
The sun is gone,
Thou art alone—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! All come alone;
All, ever since the sun hath shone,
Who travelled by this road have come alone.
Be of good cheer,
A home is here—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! Night veils the land,—
How the palms whisper as they stand!
How the well tinkles faintly through the sand!
Cool water take
Thy thirst to slake,—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! Abide! abide!
This Rock moves ever at thy side,
Pausing to welcome thee at eventide.
Ages are laid
Beneath its shade—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock!

FABER.

July 3.

THE SHADOW OF THE ROCK.

PART II.

"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."—Ps. lxi. 2.

THE shadow of the Rock! To angels' eyes
This Rock its shadow multiplies,
And at this hour in countless places lies.
One Rock, one shade,
O'er thousands laid—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! To weary feet
That have been diligent and fleet,
The sleep is deeper and the rest more sweet.
O weary, rest!
Thou art sore pressed—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! Thy bed is made;
Crowds of tired souls like thine are laid
This night beneath the self-same placid shade.
They who rest here
Wake with heaven near—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

The shadow of the Rock! Pilgrim, sleep sound!
In night's swift hours, with silent bound,
This Rock will put thee over leagues of ground,

Gaining more way
By night than day—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock!

The shadow of the Rock! One day of pain,
Thou scarce wilt hope the Rock to gain,
Yet there wilt sleep thy last sleep on the plain,
And only wake
In heaven's day-break—
Rest in the shadow of the Rock!

FABER.

* * *

July 4.

EARLY MORNING HYMN.

"The Lord's mercies are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."—LAM. iii. 22, 23.

BEHOLD, O Lord! Thy radiant sun,
Led forth by Thine almighty hand,
Obedient, joyful, has begun
Another course at Thy command.
Our pilgrim path enters another day;
Help us to journey onwards in Thy love, we pray!

That sunshine, type and emblem blest
Of Thine unchanging love and power,
Cheers the small bird upon her nest,
Revives the fragile, fading flower;
But from Thyself alone must come all light
For sad and weary hearts, in sin or sorrow's night.

O Christ! this time of early prayer
Was blessed and hallowed once of old,
When herald angels in the air
Of our redemption morning told;
Leaving the farewell, as they soared above,—
"Glory to God in heaven! on earth His peace and love!"

Father! when evening shadows fall,
The latest hour of life's brief day,
When all grows dark, and silent all,—
Even words of prayer have passed away,—
O Father! Brother! Husband of Thine own!
Remember, leave us not in that dread hour alone!

Aurora of celestial day,
Whose sun shall never know decline,
Beyond the grave we watch thy ray
In higher heavens already shine.
Through our long night Faith can thy glories see;
As we believe in God, so we believe for thee.

And even now, in darkest hours,
A dewy freshness fills the air;
Our weary souls, immortal flowers
Drooping in mists of grief and care,
Turn lovingly towards the eastern skies,
Where the Eternal Sun at length shall surely rise!

From the French. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

July 5.

A PILLOW PRAYER.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."—Ps. iv. 8.

THE day is ended. Ere I sink to sleep,
My weary spirit seeks repose in Thine,
Father! forgive my trespasses, and keep
This little life of mine.

With loving-kindness curtain Thou my bed,
And cool in rest my burning pilgrim-feet;
Thy pardon be the pillow for my head—
So shall my sleep be sweet.

At peace, dear Lord, with all the world and Thee,
No fears my soul's unwavering faith can shake;
All's well! whichever side the grave for me
The morning light may break!

Anon.

* * *

July 6.

WATERS IN THE DESERT.

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them....I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."—Isa. xli. 17, 18.

AND wilt Thou hear the fevered heart
To Thee in silence cry?

And as th' inconstant wildfires dart
  Out of the restless eye,
Wilt Thou forgive the wayward thought,
By kindly woes yet half untaught
A Saviour's right, so dearly bought,
  That Hope should never die?

Thou wilt; for many a languid prayer
  Has reached Thee from the wild,
Since the lorn mother, wandering there,
  Cast down her fainting child,
Then stole apart to weep and die,
Nor knew an angel-form was nigh,
To show soft waters gushing by
  And dewy shadows mild.

Thou wilt; for Thou art Israel's God,
  And Thine unwearied arm
Is ready yet with Moses' rod,
  The hidden rill to charm
Out of the dry unfathomed deep
Of sands, that lie in lifeless sleep,
Save when the scorching whirlwinds heap
  Their waves in rude alarm.

These moments of wild wrath are Thine—
  Thine too the drearier hour
When o'er the horizon's silent line
  Fond hopeless fancies cower,

And on the traveller's listless way
Rises and sets th' unchanging day,
No cloud in heaven to slake its ray,
  On earth no sheltering bower.

Thou wilt be there, and not forsake
  To turn the bitter pool
Into a bright and breezy lake,
  The throbbing brow to cool:
Till, left a while with Thee alone,
The wilful heart be fain to own
That He, by whom our bright hours shone,
  Our darkness best may rule

The scent of water far away
  Upon the breeze is flung:
The desert pelican to-day
  Securely leaves her young,
Reproving thankless man, who fears
To journey on a few lone years,
Where on the sand Thy step appears,
  Thy crown in sight is hung.

Thou, who didst sit on Jacob's well
  The weary hour of noon,
The languid pulses Thou canst tell,
  The nerveless spirit tune.
Thou, from whose cross in anguish burst
The cry that owned Thy dying thirst,
To Thee we turn, our Last and First,
  Our Sun and soothing Moon.

From darkness, here, and dreariness
  We ask not full repose;
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
  Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up Earth's dark glade,
  The gate of Heaven unclose?

KEBLE.

* * *

July 7.

CHANGING MOODS.

"I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind."
—ROM. vii. 22, 23.

WE are a shadow and a shining, we!
  One moment nothing seems but what we see,
Nor aught to rule but common circumstance—
Naught is to seek but praise, to shun but chance;
A moment more, and God is all in all,
And not a sparrow from its nest can fall
But from the ground its chirp goes up into His hall.

I know at least which is the better mood.
When on a heap of cares I sit and brood,

Like Job upon his ashes, sorely vexed,
I feel a lower thing than when I stood
The world's true heir, fearless, as on its stalk
A lily meeting Jesus in His walk;
I am not all mood—I can judge betwixt.

George Macdonald.

* * *

July 8.

ATTRACTION.

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."—"Draw me, we will run after thee."—"Jesus said, I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—Jer. xxxi. 3; Song of Sol. i. 4; John xii. 32.

We all do fade—we wither and decay,
Dust unto dust we give;
In sin and sighs we pine and pass away,
Ah, how then shall we live?

Our place is sought for, and it is not found
With utmost care and cost;
We are as water spilt upon the ground,
That sinks absorbed and lost.

Lost? Nay! the sun can gather up again
To shrines of pearly sky;
The fallen, spent, irrevocable rain
May be exhaled on high.

Each drop that seemed as it had run to waste
May win a dazzling glow,
By noon's strong beam attracted, and embraced
Within the glittering bow.

The soul sunk deepest, tinged with darkest taint
May be allured from loss,—
May rise to shine, a radiant sun-like saint,
Attracted by the Cross.

A. R. Cousin.

* * *

July 9.

"SWEET BIRD, FLY LOW."

"Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." —"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—Ps. cxxxviii. 6; 1 Peter v. 6.

ONE day, when a summer storm
Had shadowed the landscape o'er,
From its swoop so dark, an affrighted lark
Flew in at the greenhouse door.
There, safe among smiling flowers,
He waited a calmer sky;
But ah, wing-proof was the crystal roof
Through which he had thought to fly.
"Alas," said he, "no rest for me
Until these bars be riven!"
Said I, "Not so; sweet bird, fly low
To find the way to heaven."

On him, though the sun shone forth
A terror of darkness fell,
And seemed to rush o'er the crimson flush
Of the flowers he had loved so well.
Quick fluttered the heaving heart
In the hush of the noontide heat,
And like sounding rain, on the mocking pane,
How swiftly the small wings beat!
"O cruel sky, I faint, I die,
Oh let these bars be riven!"
"Sweet bird, not so; fly low, fly low,
And find the way to heaven."

How sudden a silence fell!
I saw the sweet bird no more;
But he sank down then, to revive again,
And creep through the open door.—
And many a human heart
In wonder of vain regret,
In its passionate pain, as it strives in vain,
Beats on in its blindness yet;—
With quivering cry, "I faint, I die,
Oh let these bars be riven!"
"Dear heart, not so; fly low, fly low,
To find the way to heaven."

Oh joy! I have found the way!
But neither by strength nor art;
For I sank undone, at the feet of One—
The lowly and meek of heart.

Now freedom and bliss are mine;
In vain had I toiled and striven,
For as Wisdom planned, it was Love's own hand
That lifted me into heaven.
O hearts that cry, "I faint, I die,
These bars they must be riven!"
Love says, "Not so; fly low, fly low,
And I will give you heaven."

MRS. MERRYLEES.

* * *

July 10.

DISAPPOINTMENTS.

"I am God, and there is none like me...My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."—"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—ISA. xlvi. 9, 10; MATT. vi. 10.

ALL round the rolling world, both night and day,
A ceaseless voice ascends from those who pray:
"Thy will be done on earth, as now in heaven;
Unto our souls a perfect choice be given."

All round the rolling world, both night and day,
A ceaseless answer comes to those who pray;
By shattered hopes, crossed plans, and fruitless pains,
Thy heavenly Master thine allegiance trains.

Guessing some portion of His great design,
Thou seek'st to forward it by ways of thine;

He who the whole disposes as is meet,
Sees a necessity for thy defeat.

Yet to the faithful there is no such thing
As disappointment; failures only bring
A gentle pang, as peacefully they say,
"His purpose stands, though mine has passed away."

All is fulfilling, all is working still,
To teach thee flexibility of will;
To great achievements let thy wishes soar,
Yet meek submission pleases Christ still more.

When Love's long discipline is overpast,
Thy will too shall be done with His at last,
When all is perfected, and thou dost stand,
Robed, crowned, and glorified at His right hand.

C. M. NOEL

* * *

July 11.

MY LITTLE DOVES.

"Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me."—Ps. xlii. 8.

MY little doves have left a nest
Upon an Indian tree,
Whose leaves fantastic take their rest
Or motion from the sea;

For, ever there the sea-winds go
With sunlit paces to and fro.......

My little doves were ta'en away
  From that glad nest of theirs,
Across an ocean rolling gray,
  And tempest-clouded airs—
My little doves, who lately knew
The sky and wave by warmth and blue.......

Soft falls their chant, as on the nest
  Beneath the sunny zone;
For love, that stirred it in their breast,
  Has not aweary grown,
And 'neath the city's shade can keep
The well of music clear and deep.......

So teach ye me the wisest part,
  My little doves! to move
Along the city-ways with heart
  Assured by holy love,
And vocal with such songs as own
A fountain to the world unknown.

'Twas hard to sing by Babel's stream,
  More hard in Babel's street;
But if the soulless creatures deem
  Their music not unmeet
For sunless walls—let us begin,
Who wear immortal wings within!

To me fair memories belong
  Of scenes that used to bless,
For no regret, but present song
  And lasting thankfulness,
And very soon to break away,
Like types, in purer things than they.

I will have hopes that cannot fade,
  For flowers the valley yields;
I will have humble thoughts instead
  Of silent, dewy fields;
My spirit and my God shall be
My seaward hill, my boundless sea!

E. B. Browning.

* * *

July 12.

LOST AND WON.

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof."—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life."—Eccles. vii. 8; James i. 12.

SHE left her moorings, oh how brave!
  With sails and pennons gay,
And proudly breasting every wave,
  That golden summer day;

While from the crowd that lined the pier,
  All watching as she goes,

Loud, eager shouts, cheer upon cheer,
Tumultuously arose.

One ancient seaman stood ahead,
Silent, and little moved,—
"I'll shout when she returns," he said,
"I'll shout when she is proved!"

And did she then return the same?—
Dismantled, and forlorn,
Just drifting into port, she came
One cloudy winter's morn.

Then loudly shouted this old man,
"Ropes, ropes, boys! ropes ahoy!"
And with the best he dragged, he ran,
As if himself a boy.

I asked him, "Was she worth this stir,
With so much to renew?"
"She's only lost her rigging, sir,—
A good ship and a true!

"In truth," these were his parting words,—
"I fear gay, painted things;
For all the world they're just like birds
That never tried their wings.

"But she has fought the ocean now—
Yes, sir, and she has won!
The ship is sound from stern to bow,
She'll have my lad next run!"

And, even thus, I thought that night,—
  Thus, in the great award,
They who have suffered in the fight
  Are dearest to our Lord.

We think they lost; but they have won,
  When heaven comes in view,
And when they hear that strange "Well done!
  My servants tried and true."

What matter all their wrongs or ills?
  "Much tribulation" then
Is but the deepest note that thrills
  Their loud and glad "Amen!"

S. L. F.

* * *

July 13.

"RISE! FOR THE DAY IS PASSING."

"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."—"The night cometh, when no man can work."—2 Sam. x. 12; John ix. 4.

RISE! for the day is passing,
  And you lie dreaming on;—
The others have buckled their armour
  And forth to the field have gone.
A place in the ranks awaits you,
  Each man has some part to play;

The past and the future are nothing
  In the face of the stern *to-day.*

Rise from your dreams of the future—
  Of gaining some hard-fought field,
Of storming some airy fortress,
  Or bidding some giant yield.
Your future has deeds of glory,
  Of honour (God grant it may !)
But your arm will never be stronger,
  Or the need more great, than to-day.

Rise ! if the past detains you,
  Her sunshine and storms forget ;
No chains so unworthy to hold you
  As those of a vain regret.
Sad or bright, she is lifeless for ever ;
  Cast her phantom arms away,
Nor look back, save to learn the lesson
  Of a nobler strife to-day.

Rise ! for the day is passing ;
  The low sound you scarcely hear,
Is the enemy marching to battle—
  Arise, for the foe is near !
Stay not to sharpen your weapons,
  Or the hour will strike at last,
When, from dreams of a coming battle,
  You may wake to find it past !

ANON.

July 14.

PERSIS.

"Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord."
Rom. xvi. 12.

SHE laboured much! From age to age
That record from the holy page
Gleams out in colours rare and dim,
Soft glowing with the touch of Him
Whose blessing falls, with tenderest grace,
To glorify the lowliest place.

She laboured much! We may not know
If lofty was her lot, or low;
If love met hers from kindred eyes,
If girded round by sweetest ties,
Or from a home, like nest all torn,
Left to the bitter wind forlorn,

She went, her sorrow hid the while
Beneath an unrevealing smile,
On other brows the pain to read
None careth on her own to heed;
Taught by a grief that will not sleep,
True comfortings for them that weep.

We cannot tell; we only know
That from these days of long ago

There comes to us a fragrant breath,
Like rose-leaves falling fair in death;
A memory—earth has few of such—
Of one who loved and laboured much.......

She laboured much! Two women stand
With pure, true faces hand-in-hand,
Persis, beloved; and she, the one
Who meekly "what she could" hath done;
With voices loving still, and clear,
Floating o'er many a silent year,
Bidding their sisters evermore
Follow where they have gone before.

H. Bowman.

* * *

July 15.

TRIED BY FIRE.

"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."
1 Cor. iii. 13.

WHAT, what is tried in the fires of God?
And what are the fires that try?—
All, all is tried in the fires of God,
And many the fires that try.

And what is burned in the fires of God?—
All but the fine, pure gold;
The treasures we offer for praise and pride,
Or for pride and self withhold;

And we, as far as our souls are wrapt
  In the garment that waxeth old.

And when will the fires of God be lit?—
  They are burning every day;
They are trying us all, within and without,
  The gold and the potter's clay.

But what is lost in the fires of God?—
  Nothing that is not dross;
No tiniest grain of the golden sands,
  No wood of the true, true Cross;

No smallest seed of the lowliest deed
  Of faith and hope and love,
The precious things that abide earth's fires,
  And for ever abide above.

Yes! nought is lost in the fires of God
  That is not waste or dross,—
That we would not choose, could we see, to lose,
  And say, this was gain, not loss!

MRS. CHARLES.

* * *

July 16.

"MADE PERFECTLY WHOLE."

"They brought unto Jesus all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole."—MATT. xiv. 35, 36.

I CANNOT rest, my God, content
  With this slow Christian pace;

This ceaseless lapse to native bent,
  This halting in the race;
By turns, this pride for duty meant,
  For duty missed, disgrace.

Fain would I every whit be whole
  Of sin's so sharp disease,
And feel perfection in my soul
  Advancing by degrees;
I would be struggling near the goal,
  Not resting on my knees.

O Saviour! only from Thy touch,
  Cure, as of old, we meet!
On earth to be beside Thee much
  Is healing, kind and sweet;
And heaven's nearness will be such
  As shall make all complete.

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

July 17.

"APART."

"And Jesus said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."—MARK vi. 31.

"COME ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile:"
  So spake the gracious Lord, with gracious smile.
What soul-refreshing thoughts the words suggest—
"Come ye yourselves apart" with Me, "and rest!"

"Come ye yourselves apart," and tell Me all
That you have done and taught since that last call—
Since last I sent you forth to work for Me
Amid the haunts of sin and misery.

"Come ye yourselves apart," and do not fear
To tell Me all your thoughts; I love to hear!
Begin where you left off; leave nothing out;
Tell Me each word and work, each hope and doubt.

"Come ye yourselves apart," and listen, too;
For I have many things to say to you......
You cannot learn them all in one short day,
But something may be learnt if you will stay.

"Come ye yourselves apart:" I care for you,
Not for the sake of aught that you can do;
Your work is very poor and weak at best,
But ye yourselves are dear; then come, and rest!

"Come ye yourselves apart;" renew your strength,
That you may better go prepared, at length,
By holy leisure spent alone with Me,
To work the work prepared for thee—for thee!

And when the closing hour of life's short day
Shall tell of earthly work all passed away,
I will draw near, and say, with loving smile,—
Fear not; but come apart, and rest awhile!

Rest, rest with Me, awhile, in Paradise,
Till He who bade thee rest shall bid thee rise;

Then rise, with quickened powers, to spend for Me
That blessed leisure-time, Eternity!

Author of "The Old, Old Story."

July 18.

CALM ME, MY GOD!

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."—"And Jesus arose, and rebuked the wind: and there was a calm."—ISA. xxx. 15; LUKE viii. 24.

CALM me, my God, and keep me calm;
While these hot breezes blow,
Be like the night-dew's cooling balm
Upon earth's fevered brow.

Calm me, my God, and keep me calm,
Soft resting on Thy breast;
Soothe me with holy hymn and psalm,
And bid my spirit rest.

Calm me, my God, and keep me calm;
Let Thine outstretchèd wing
Be like the shade of Elim's palm
Beside her desert-spring.

Yes! keep me calm, though loud and rude
The sounds my ear that greet;
Calm in the closet's solitude,
Calm in the bustling street;

Calm in the hour of buoyant health,
  Calm in my hour of pain;
Calm in my poverty or wealth,
  Calm in my loss or gain;

Calm in the sufferance of wrong,
  Like Him who bore my shame;
Calm 'mid the threatening, taunting throng,
  Who hate Thy holy name;

Calm as the ray of sun or star
  Which storms assail in vain;
Moving unruffled through earth's war
  The eternal calm to gain.

Dr. Bonar.

* * *

July 19.

"BLESSED ARE THE HOME-SICK, FOR THEY SHALL COME HOME."

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."
Heb. xi. 16.

THE stranger land is lovely,
  But still it looks strange;
Its skies are fair and smiling,
  But swiftly they change.
Its morning dew is fleeting,
  Its fiery noon kills,

Its suns haste toward their setting
  Behind the dark hills.
Its moonlight sheds a sorrow,
  Its star-beams shine cold ;—
And the pilgrim feels a pining
  That ne'er may be told ;
Crying, " Oh for my country !
  How long must I roam ? "
Now blessed are the home-sick,
  For they shall come home !

The stranger land hath summers
  That ripen and shine,
It hath sheaves of the valley
  And fruits of the vine ;
But the glory swift departeth,
  The light will not last,
The summer soon is ended,
  The harvest soon past.
A drought is on the beauty,
  It dims and grows old,—
And the pilgrim feels a pining
  That ne'er may be told ;
Crying, " Oh for my country !
  The land without the tomb ! "
Now blessed are the home-sick,
  For they shall come home !

The stranger land hath fond hearts
  That beat and that burn,

Soft bosoms o'er their treasure
  That dote and that yearn;
But their longing, still defeated,
  Must evermore crave,
And Love is oftenest seated
  Beside a green grave.
And bootless is all bright store
  Of glory and gold;
And the pilgrim feels a pining
  That ne'er may be told,—
Crying, "Oh, for my country,
  Beyond the death-doom!"
Now blessed are the home-sick,
  For they shall come home!

A. R. Cousin.

* * *

July 20.

STILLNESS.

"So he giveth his beloved sleep."—Ps. cxxvii. 2.

God sends sometimes a stillness in our life,
  The bivouac, the sleep,
When on the silent battle-field the strife
    Is hushed to slumber deep;
When wearied hearts exhausted sink to rest,
Remembering not the struggle nor the quest.

We know such hours, when the dim, dewy night
    Bids day's hot turmoil cease;

When star by star steals noiselessly in sight,
With silent smiles of peace;
When we lay down our load, and half forget
The morrow comes, and we must bear it yet.

We know such hours, when after days of pain,
And nights when sleep was not,
God gives us ease, and peace, and calm again,
Till, all the past forgot,
We say, in rest and thankfulness most deep,
"E'en so, He giveth His beloved sleep."......

Deep in the heart of pain, God's hand hath set
A hidden rest and bliss;
Take as His gift the pain, the gift brings yet
A truer happiness.
God's voice speaks, through it all, the high behest
That bids His people enter into rest.

LUCY FLETCHER.

* * *

July 21.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."—MATT. xxvi. 42.

FOUR little words,—no more,—
Easy to say;
But thoughts that went before,
Can words convey?

The struggle, only known
  To one proud soul,
And Him, whose eye alone
  Has marked the whole,—

Before that stubborn will
  At last was broke,
And a low "Peace, be still!"
  One soft Voice spoke.

The pang, when that sad heart
  Its dreams resigned,
And strength was found, to part
  Those bonds long twined,—

To yield that treasure up,
  So fondly clasped,—
To drain that bitter cup,
  So sadly grasped!

But all is calm at last,—
  "Thy will be done!"
Enough—the storm is past,
  The field is won.

Now for the peaceful breast,
  The quiet sleep,—
For soul and spirit rest,
  Tranquil and deep;

Rest, whose full bliss and power
  They only know,

Who knew the bitter hour
Of restless woe.

The rebel will subdued,
The fond heart free;
"Thy will be done,"—all good
That comes from Thee.

All weary thought and care,
Lord, we resign;
Ours is to do—to bear,—
To choose is Thine.

Four little words,—no more,—
Easy to say;
But what was felt before,
Can words convey?

H. L. L.

* * *

July 22.

OBEDIENCE.

"I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts."—Ps. cxix. 45.

TIME was I shrank from what was right,
From fear of what was wrong;
I would not brave the sacred fight,
Because the foe was strong.

But now I cast that finer sense
And sorer shame aside;

Such dread of sin was indolence,
Such aim at Heaven was pride.

So, when my Saviour calls, I rise
And calmly do my best;
Leaving to Him, with silent eyes
Of hope and fear, the rest.

I step, I mount, where He has led;
Men count my haltings o'er;
I know them; yet, though self I dread,
I love His precepts more.

Newman.

* * *

July 23.

A SONNET. TRUST.

"What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?... How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!"—Matt. vii. 9-11.

CONSIDER: were it filial in a child
To speak in such wise?—"Father, though I know
How strong your love is, having proved it so
Since earliest memory,—and though you have piled
Store upon store, with care that has beguiled
You oft of needed ease, thus to bestow
Comforts upon me when your head lies low,—
Yet in my heart are doubts unreconciled.

To-morrow, when I hunger, can I be
  Right sure, for bread you will not give a clod,
Letting me starve what time you hold in fee
  (O'erlooking lesser wants) the acres broad
Won for me through your life-long toil?" Yet *we*,
  In just such fashion, dare to doubt of God!

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

July 24.

WORDS.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."—"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."—PROV. xviii. 21; Ps. cxli. 3.

WORDS are lighter than the cloud-foam
  Of the restless ocean spray;
Vainer than the trembling shadow
  That the next hour steals away;
By the fall of summer raindrops
  Is the air more deeply stirred,
And the rose-leaf that we tread on
  Will outlive a word;—

Yet, on the dull silence breaking
  With a lightning flash, a word
Bearing endless desolation
  On its wings, I heard.
Earth can forge no keener weapon,
  Dealing surer death and pain,

And the cruel echo answered
Through long years again.

I have known one word hang starlike
O'er a dreary waste of years,
And it only shone the brighter
Looked at through a mist of tears;
While a weary wanderer gathered
Hope and heart on life's dark way,
By its faithful promise, shining
Clearer day by day.

I have known a spirit calmer
Than the calmest lake, and clear
As the heaven that gazed upon it,
With no wave of hope or fear;
But a tempest swept across it,
And its deepest depths were stirred,
Never, never more to slumber,
Only by a word.

I have known a word, more gentle
Than the breath of summer air;
In a listening heart it nestled,
And it lived for ever there.
Not the beating of its prison
Stirred it ever, night or day,
Only with the heart's last throbbing
Could it fade away.

Words are mighty, words are living—
  Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels, crowding round us,
  With heaven's light upon their wings.
Every word has its own spirit,
  True or false, that never dies,
Every word our lips have uttered
    Echoes in God's skies.

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

* * *

July 25.

"OUR SYMPATHIZER."

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."
ISA. liii. 4.

WHEN gathering clouds around I view,
  And days are dark, and friends are few,
On Him I lean who, not in vain,
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my grief, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To fly the good I would pursue,
And do the thing I would not do,
Still He, who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in the dangerous hour.

If wounded love my bosom swell,
Despised by those I prized too well,
He shall His pitying aid bestow
Who felt on earth severer woe,
At once betrayed, denied, or fled,
By those who shared His daily bread.

When vexing thoughts within me rise,
And, sore dismayed, my spirit dies,
Yet He, who once vouchsafed to bear
The sickening anguish of despair,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry
The throbbing heart, the weeping eye.

When mourning o'er some stone I bend,
Which covers all that was a friend,
And from his voice, his hand, his smile,
Divides me for a little while,
Thou, Saviour, markst the tears I shed,
For Thou didst weep o'er Lazarus dead.

And, oh! when I have safely past
Through every conflict but the last,
Still, still unchanging watch beside
My dying bed, for Thou hast died!
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the latest tear away!

GRANT.

July 26.

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST.

"Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work...that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."—John v. 17, 23.

O CHRIST, who didst appear in Judah land,
Thence by the Cross go back to God's right hand,
Plain history, and things our sense beyond,
In Thee together come and correspond;
How rulest Thou from the undiscovered bourne
The world-wise world that laughs Thee still to scorn?
'Tis heart on heart Thou rulest. Thou art the same
At God's right hand as here exposed to shame,
And therefore workest now as Thou didst then,—
Feeding the faint divine in humble men.
Through all Thy realms, from Thee goes out heart-power,
Working the holy, satisfying hour,
When all shall love, and all be loved again.

George Macdonald.

* * *

July 27.

THE PARTING SPIRIT.

"The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it."—Rev. xxi. 23.

"FAREWELL, thou vase of splendour,
I need thy light no more;

No radiance canst thou render
The world to which I soar.

"Nor sun nor moonbeam brightens
Those regions with a ray;
But God Himself enlightens
Their one, eternal day.

"Farewell, sweet Nature, ever
So dear to this fond heart,
From all thy long-loved treasure
I do not weep to part.

"The land to which I'm going
Has fairer flowers than thine,
Life's river ever flowing,
And skies that ever shine.

"Farewell, each dearest union
That blest my earthly hours,
We yet shall hold communion
In amaranthine bowers.

"The love that seems forsaken,
When friends in death depart,
In heaven again shall waken,
And repossess the heart."......

So sang the parting spirit,
While round flowed many a tear;
Then spread her wings, to inherit
Her home in yonder sphere.

EDMESTON.

July 28.

THE TWO VOICES.

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. xxi. 4.

TWO solemn Voices, in a funeral strain,
Met, as bright sunbeams and dark bursts of rain
Meet in the sky:
"Thou art gone hence!" one sang; "our light is flown,
Our beautiful, that seemed too much our own
Ever to die!

"Thou art gone hence!—our joyous hills among
Never again to pour thy soul in song
When spring-flowers rise;
Never the friend's familiar step to meet
With loving laughter, and the welcome sweet
Of thy glad eyes!"

"Thou art gone home, gone home!" then, high and clear,
Warbled that other Voice. "Thou hast no tear
Again to shed;
Never to fold the robe o'er secret pain;
Never, weighed down by memory's clouds, again
To bow thy head.

"Thou art gone home! oh, early crowned and blest,
Where could the love of that deep heart find rest
In aught below?

Thou must have seen each dream in turn decay,
All the rich rose-leaves drop from life away,
Thrice blest to go!"

Yet sighed again that breeze-like Voice of grief,—
"Thou art gone hence! alas, that aught so brief
So loved should be!
Thou tak'st our summer hence,—the flower, the tone,
The music of our being, all in one
Depart with thee!

"Fair form, young spirit, morning vision fled!
Canst *thou* be of the dead, the silent dead,
The dark unknown?
Yes; to the dwelling where no footsteps fall,
Never again to light up hearth or hall,
Thy smile is gone!"

"Home, home!" once more the exulting Voice arose;
"Thou art gone home!—from that divine repose
Never to roam;
Never to say farewell, to weep in vain,
To read of change in eyes beloved again,—
Thou art gone home!

"By the bright waters now thy lot is cast,—
Joy for thee, happy friend! thy bark hath past
The rough sea's foam;
Now the long yearnings of thy soul are stilled;
Home, home! thy peace is won, thy heart is filled,—
Thou art gone home!"

MRS. HEMANS.

July 29.

TRUST FOR TO-MORROW.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass."—"Take therefore no thought for the morrow."—Ps. xxxvii. 5; Matt. vi. 34.

"WHAT shall I do?" asks the anxious soul,
Looking on to future days;
"The skies that are now so blue and fair
Will be darkened soon, and then grief and care
Will come to my shadowed ways."

"What will God do?" asks the trustful heart,
"When the summer days are gone?
When the autumn comes, with its falling leaves,
He will surely give me some precious sheaves,
As I toil in the harvest sun."

"What shall I do?" asks the troubled soul;
"I think I am His; but how
Can one so helpless hold fast, nor faint?
The snares and the dangers who can paint?
And beyond they are worse than now!"

"What will God do?" asks the trustful heart;
"'Be faithful to death,' He said;
He will give me strength, He will hold me fast,
He will guide my steps, and I know at last
I shall be comforted."

"What shall I do?" sighs the anxious soul,
"When I reach that dark, dark spot
Where the wild waves toss as I look before,
And behind, with a thundering awful roar,
Comes the foe who pities not?"

"What will God do?" asks the trustful heart,
"When I reach that fearful place?
He will part the waves—they shall backward turn;
He will conquer the foe; and all shall learn
The might of His power and grace."

O troubled soul, cast thy burden down,
And rest in His promised grace;
For the child who is carried in strong, kind arms,
Feels no weight of care, knows no wild alarms,
As he looks in his Father's face.

Julia E. Ball.

* * *

July 30.

MIGHTY TO SAVE.

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—Heb. ix. 28.

THE Lord of might, from Sinai's brow,
Gave forth His voice of thunder;
And Israel lay on earth below
Outstretched in fear and wonder.

Beneath His feet was pitchy night,
And at His left hand and His right
The rocks were rent asunder!

The Lord of love, on Calvary,
A meek and suffering stranger,
Upraised to Heaven His languid eye
In nature's hour of danger;
For us He bare the weight of woe,
For us He gave His blood to flow,
And met His Father's anger.

The Lord of love, the Lord of might,
The King of all created,
Shall back return to claim His right
On clouds of glory seated;
With trumpet sound and angel song,
And hallelujahs loud and long,
O'er Death and Hell defeated!

HEBER.

* * *

July 31.

THE ANSWER OF THE HILLS.

"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed."—"The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."—ISA. liv. 10; ROM. viii. 21 (*Revised Version*).

THE shining hills before me lay—
My musing heart was fain to say,

"I mourn, ye hills, the stern decree
That saith, 'Ye shall no longer be,
On that dread day
When heaven and earth shall pass away!'"

The shining hills made calm reply,
That fell upon my foolish cry
Like words that silence, gravely mild,
The fretful accents of a child,—
"Beneath, on high,
God's work is good, and shall not die.

"Though heaven above and earth below
Shall share the universal woe,
That doom of fire shall but destroy
All that not ministers to joy;
Yea, even so
Full life and beauty shall we know.

"That end true glory shall begin,
That doom is but the death of sin,
That night is mother of the morn
In travail ere the light is born;
That woe shall win
A world that Life *can* reign within......

"Yea, trust that He who all began
Hath for the end His perfect plan;
His good gifts are for evermore!
Creation, that in common bore

The woful ban,
Shall fail not of the bliss, of man.

"God's pity left her to the race
He would win back into His grace,
His poet sweet, His prophet true!
He shall her youth with man's renew,
And each tear's trace
Wipe ever from her glorious face!

"Then shall ye see the field, the flood,
The restful vale, the placid wood,
All that ye loved in all the land;
And we, whose 'strength is His,' shall stand
As erst we stood,
As when of old He called us good.

"Then come! for supreme joy in woe,
Last triumph in last overthrow!
In all thy grace, in all thy power,
Come, O thou sweet tremendous hour!
Come even so,
For heaven above and earth below!"

Rev. S. J. Stone.

August 1.

THE RIVER-PATH.

"It shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."—ZECH. xiv. 7.

NO bird-song floated down the hill,
The tangled bank below was still;
No rustle from the birchen stem,
No ripple from the water's hem.
The dusk of twilight round us grew,
We felt the falling of the dew,
For from us, ere the day was done,
The wooded hills shut out the sun.

But on the river's farther side
We saw the hill-tops glorified,—
A tender glow, exceeding fair,
A dream of day without its glare.
With us the damp, the chill, the gloom;
With them the sunset's rosy bloom;
While dark, through willowy vistas seen,
The river rolled in shade between.

From out the darkness where we trod
We gazed upon those hills of God,
Whose light seemed not of moon or sun,—
We spoke not, but our thought was one.
We paused, as if from that bright shore
Beckoned our dear ones gone before,—
And stilled our beating hearts to hear
The voices lost to mortal ear!

Sudden our pathway turned from night;—
The hills swung open to the light;
Through their green gates the sunshine showed
A long, slant splendour downward flowed.
Down glade and glen and bank it rolled,
It bridged the shaded stream with gold,
And, borne on piers of mist, allied
The shadowy with the sunlit side.

"So," prayed we, "when our feet draw near
The river dark, with mortal fear,
And the night cometh, chill with dew,
O Father! let Thy light break through!
So let the hills of doubt divide,
So bridge with faith the sunless tide!
So let the eyes that fail on earth
On Thy eternal hills look forth;
And in Thy beckoning angels know
The dear ones whom we loved below!"

WHITTIER.

August 2.

THE LAND BEYOND THE SEA.

"Thine eyes shall behold the land that is very far off."
ISA. xxxiii. 17.

THE Land beyond the Sea!
When will life's task be o'er?
When shall we reach that soft blue shore
O'er the dark strait, whose billows foam and roar?
When shall we come to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea?

The Land beyond the Sea!
How close it often seems,
When flushed with evening's peaceful gleams;
And the wistful heart looks o'er the strait, and dreams!
It longs to fly to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Sometimes distinct and clear
It grows upon the eye and ear,
And the gulf narrows to a thread-like mere;
We seem half-way to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Oh, how the lapsing years
Mid our not unsubmissive tears,
Have borne, now singly, now in fleets, the biers
Of those we love, to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
When will our toil be done?
Slow-footed years! more swiftly run
Into the gold of that unsetting sun!
Home-sick we are for thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Why fadest thou in light?
Why art thou better seen towards night?
Dear Land! look always plain, look always bright,
That we may gaze on thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Sweet is thine endless rest,
But sweeter far the Father's Breast
Upon thy shores eternally possest;
For Jesus reigns o'er thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

Faber.

August 3.

BY-AND-BY.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—"One thing is needful."—Ps. xc. 12; Luke x. 42.

WHAT will it matter, by-and-by,
Whether my path below was bright,
Whether it wound through dark or light,
Under a gray or a golden sky,
When I look back on it, by-and-by?

What will it matter, by-and-by,
Whether, unhelped, I toiled alone,
Dashing my foot against a stone,
Missing the charge of the angel nigh,
Bidding me think of the by-and-by?

What will it matter, by-and-by,
Whether with cheek to cheek I've lain
Close by the pallid angel, Pain,
Soothing myself through sob and sigh,
"All will be elsewise, by-and-by"?

What will it matter?—Nothing, if I
Only am sure that the way I have trod,
Gloomy or gladdened, leads to God;
Questioning not of the how or why,
If I but reach Him, by-and-by.

What will I care for the unshared sigh,
 If, in my fear of lapse or fall,
 Close I have clung to Christ through all,
Mindless how rough the road might lie,
Sure He will smooth it, by-and-by.

What will it matter, by-and-by?
 Nothing but this, That Joy or Pain
 Lifted me upward—helped to gain,
Whether through storm, or smile, or sigh,
Heaven—Home—All in All—by-and-by!

Margaret J. Preston.

* * *

August 4.

THE REST THAT REMAINETH.

"Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."—"My flesh also shall rest in hope."—"There remaineth a rest to the people of God."—Dan. xii. 13; Ps. xvi. 9; Heb. iv. 9.

WHEN the rest of faith is ended, and the rest in hope is past,
The rest of love remaineth, Sabbath of life at last.
No more fleeting hours hurrying down the day,
But golden stillness of glory, never to pass away.

Time with its pressure of moments, mocking us as they fell,
With relentless beat of a footstep, hour by hour the knell

Of a hope or an aspiration, then shall have passed away,
Leaving a grand, calm leisure, leisure of endless day.

Leisure that cannot be measured by touch of time or place,
Finding its counterpart measure only in infinite space;
Full, and yet ever filling; leisure without alloy,
Eternity's seal on the limitless charter of heavenly joy.

Leisure to fathom the fathomless, leisure to seek and
to know
Marvels and secrets and glories eternity only can show;
Leisure of holiest gladness, leisure of holiest love,
Leisure to drink from the Fountain of infinite peace
above!

F. R. Havergal.

* * *

August 5.

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES.

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."—Mark x. 13, 14, 16.

"THE Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah the mother one day;
"He is healing the people who throng Him,
With a touch of the finger, they say.

"And now I shall carry the children—
Little Rachel, and Samuel, and John,

I shall carry the baby Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled:
"Now who but a doting mother
Would think of a thing so wild?

"If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever—'twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many in Israel."

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan:
I feel such a burden of care,
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there.

"If He lay His hand on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know;
For a blessing for ever and ever
Will follow them as they go."

So over the hills of Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep in her bosom,
And Rachel her brothers between,

'Mong the people who hung on His teaching,
Or waited His touch and His word,
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"Now why shouldst thou hinder the Master,"
Said Peter, "with children like these?
Seest not how from morning till evening
He teacheth, and healeth disease?"

Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children,
Permit them to come unto Me!"
And He took in His arms little Esther,
And Rachel He set on His knee;

And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As He laid His hand on the brothers,
And blest them with tenderest love;

As He said of the babes in His bosom,
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven"—
And strength for all duty and trial
That hour to her spirit was given.

Julia Gill.

* * *

August 6.

THE PILGRIM PSALM.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."—Ps. xxiii. 1.

"SAY it after me, little child,
'The Lord is my Shepherd!'"
And straightway the little child replies,
With face upturned to the holy eyes—
"The Lord is my Shepherd."

No fear for the future lieth hid
In the lamb's confiding:
"I shall not want," is its heart's belief;
What does it know of dangers or grief;
Led by the Shepherd's guiding?

Guided to pastures of tender grass,
Where still water floweth,
And what though the nether springs be dry?
With Him is the fountain of supply,
And the source he knoweth.

Childhood is over, a lamb no more,
Far, far it is straying—
The mire of sin on its snowy fleece,
A stranger now to the paths of peace,
Its childhood's Guide betraying!

But see, the Shepherd follows still,
Though the worst He knoweth;
The hands that were pierced stretch out to aid,—
Fallen one, grasp them, be not afraid,
Pardon His touch bestoweth.

And a new glad song of praise is heard,
Borne on love's grateful wings—
"He restoreth my soul, He sets my feet
In paths of righteousness new and sweet,"—
This is the song he sings.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley's gloom,
Dark with shadowy dread,
Peopled with all that a man most fears,
Phantoms of sickness, and death, and tears,
Hiding the sky o'erhead,

"Yet will I fear not, for Thou art there,
That valley was trod by Thee;
Not willingly does Thy rod descend,
Its wounds are the chastenings of a friend,
Therefore it comforts me."

The heat of battle is over now,
The soldier is weak and old;
But a double glory lights his days—
Earth's setting sun, and the dawning rays
That stretch from the land of gold.

Enemies stand in powerless rage,
Seeing his table spread;
The cup of Love, in his trembling hold,
Brimmeth with mercies manifold,
And God's oil shines on his head.

The goodness that held his childhood's hand,
The mercy then that found him,
Shall surely follow him all his days,
Till the great "for ever's" ceaseless praise
In God's own House surround him.

J. L. PITCAIRN.

August 7.

MURMURS.

"And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord."—"Come near before the Lord: for he hath heard your murmurings."—Num. xi. 1; Ex. xvi. 9.

WHY wilt thou make bright music
Give forth a sound of pain?
Why wilt thou weave fair flowers
Into a weary chain?

Why turn each cool gray shadow
Into a world of fears?
Why say the winds are wailing?
Why call the dew-drops tears?

The voices of happy nature,
And the heaven's sunny gleam,
Reprove thy sick heart's fancies,
Upbraid thy foolish dream.

Listen, and I will tell thee
The song Creation sings,
From the humming of bees in the heather
To the flutter of angels' wings.

An echo rings for ever,
The sound can never cease;
It speaks to God of glory,
It speaks to earth of peace.

Not alone did angels sing it
  To the poor shepherds' ear;
But the spherèd heavens chant it,
  While listening ages hear.

Above thy peevish wailing
  Rises that holy song,
Above earth's foolish clamour,
  Above the voice of wrong.

No creature of God is too lowly
  To murmur peace and praise;
When the starry nights grow silent,
  Then speak the sunny days.

So leave thy sick heart's fancies,
  And lend thy little voice
To the silver song of glory
  That bids the world rejoice.

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

August 8.

THE CRADLE AND THE CROSS.

"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."
LUKE ii. 19.

THE cradle which the world had drest,
  To be her Lord's first place of rest,
Is this poor manger hard and rude,
The little Child sleeps on the wood,—
    What dost thou ponder, Mary?

The Lord of Glory's dying bed,
Two rafters that are crossways laid;
One touches earth, but points the skies,
While right and left the other lies,—
Why art thou weeping, Mary?

To thee this wondrous Child was born,
From thee this sinless Son was torn;
Yet, had the Babe for thee not smiled,
Yet, had the Cross not claimed thy Child,
What wert thou now, O Mary?

From the German of Spitta.

August 9.

BENEDICITE.

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."—NUM. vi. 24-26.

GOD'S love and peace be with thee, where
Soe'er this soft autumnal air
Lifts the dark tresses of thy hair!......

Where'er I look, where'er I stray,
Thy thought goes with me on my way,
And hence the prayer I breathe to-day......

Thou lack'st not Friendship's spell-word, nor
The half-unconscious power to draw
All hearts to thee, by Love's sweet law;

With these good gifts of God is cast
Thy lot, and many a charm thou hast
To hold the blessed angels fast.

If, then, a fervent wish for thee
The gracious heavens will heed from me,
What should, dear heart, its burden be?

The sighing of a shaken reed,—
What can I more than meekly plead
The greatness of our common need?
God's love—unchanging, pure, and true—
The Paraclete white-shining through
His peace—the fall of Hermon's dew!
With such a prayer, on this sweet day,
As thou may'st hear and I may pray,
I greet thee, dearest, far away!

WHITTIER.

* * *

August 10.

THE MOUNTAINS.

"Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power."—"Thy righteousness is like the great mountains."—"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even for ever."—Ps. lxv. 6; xxxvi. 6; cxxv. 2.

"THE everlasting hills!" how calm they rise,
Bold witnesses to an Almighty Hand!

We gaze with longing heart and eager eyes,
And feel as if short pathway might suffice
From those pure regions to the heavenly land.

At early dawn, when the first rays of light
Play like a rose-wreath on the peaks of snow;
And late, when half the valley seems in night,
Yet still around each pale majestic height
The sun's last smile has left a crimson glow;—

Then the heart longs, it calls for wings to fly,
Above all lower scenes of earth to soar,
Where yonder golden clouds arrested lie,
Where granite cliffs and glaciers gleam on high
As with reflected light from heaven's own door.

Whence this strange spell, by thoughtful souls confest
Ever in shadow of the mountains found?
'Tis the deep voice within our human breast,
Which bids us seek a refuge and a rest
Above, beyond what meets us here around!

Ever to men of God the hills were dear,
Since on the slopes of Ararat the dove
Plucked the wet olive-pledge of hope and cheer;
Or Israel stood entranced in silent fear,
While God on Sinai thundered from above......

And once on Tabor was a vision given
Sublime as that which Israel feared to view,

When the transfigured Lord of earth and heaven,
Mortality's dim curtain lifted, riven,
Revealed His glory to His chosen few.

On mountain heights of Galilee He prayed,
While others slept, and all beneath was still;
From Olivet's recess of awful shade
Thrice was that agonized petition made,
"O that this cup might pass, if such Thy will!"......

And on Mount Zion, in the better land,
Past every danger of the pilgrim way,
At our Redeemer's feet we hope to stand,
And learn the meanings of His guiding hand
Through all the changes of our earthly day.

Then hail, calm sentinels of heaven, again!
Proclaim your message, as in ages past!
Tell us that pilgrims shall not toil in vain,
That Zion's mount we surely shall attain,
Where all home longings find a home at last!

META HEUSSER.

* * *

August 11.

LIVING WATERS.

"Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."—JOHN vii. 37.

THERE are some hearts like wells, green-mossed and deep
As ever summer saw,

And cool their water is, yea, cool and sweet;
But you must come to draw.
They hoard not, yet they rest in calm content,
And not unsought will give;
They can be quiet with their wealth unspent,
So self-contained they live.

And there are some like springs, that bubbling burst
To follow dusty ways,
And run with offered cup to quench his thirst
Where the tired traveller strays;
That never ask the meadows if they want
What is their joy to give;
Unasked, their lives to other life they grant,
So self-bestowed they live.

And One is like the ocean, deep and wide,
Wherein all waters fall;
That girdles the broad earth, and draws the tide,
Feeding and bearing all.
That breeds the mists, that sends the clouds abroad,
That takes again to give;—
Even the great and loving heart of God,
Whereby all love doth live.

Anon.

August 12.

DARK HOURS.

"I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried."—ZECH. xiii. 9.

O MY tired soul, be patient. Roughest winds
Blow over sweetest fruitage; heaviest clouds
Rain the most ample harvests on the fields.
The grass grows greenest where the wintry snows
Have fallen deepest; and the fairest flowers
Spring from old, dead decay. The darkest mine
Yields the most flashing jewels from its cell,
And stars are born of darkness, day of night.
O my tired soul, be patient! Yet for thee
Goes on the secret alchemy of life.
God, the One-giver, grants no boon to Earth
That He withholds from thee; and from the dark
Of thy great sorrow shall evolve new light,
New strength to do and suffer, new resolves,
Perchance new gladness too, and freshest hopes.
Oh, there are times that I can no more weep
That I have suffered, for I know great strength
Is born of suffering; and I trust that still,
Wrapped in the dry husks of my outer life,
Lie warmer seeds than ever yet have burst
From its dull covering. Stronger purposes
Stir consciously within, and make me great
With a new life—a life akin to God's,

Which I must nurture for the holy skies.
Help me, Thou great All-patient! for the flesh
Will sometimes falter, and the spirit fail;
Add to my human Thy diviner strength,
That out of darkness I may see great light
And follow where it ever leads—to Thee.

Anon.

* * *

August 13.

"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS."

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"—"I stretch forth my hands unto thee."—Ps. xlii. 2; cxliii. 6.

I AM pale with sick desire,—
  For my heart is far away
From this world's fitful fire
  And this world's waning day;
In a dream it overleaps
  A world of tedious ills
To where the sunshine sleeps
  On the everlasting hills.—
  Say the saints, There angels ease us,
    Glorified and white.
  They say, We rest in Jesus,
    Where is not day or night.

My soul saith, I have sought
  For a home that is not gained;
I have spent yet nothing bought,
  Have laboured but not attained:
My pride strove to mount and grow,
  And hath but dwindled down;
My love sought love, and lo!
  Hath not attained its crown.—
  Say the saints, Fresh souls increase us,
    None languish or recede.
  They say, We love our Jesus,
    And He loves us indeed.

I cannot rise above,
  I cannot rest beneath,
I cannot find out love
  Or escape from death;
Dear hopes and joys gone by
  Still mock me with a name,
My best belovèd die,
  And I cannot die with them.—
  Say the saints, No deaths decrease us,
    Where our rest is glorious.
  They say, We live in Jesus,
    Who once died for us.

O my soul, she beats her wings,
  And pants to fly away
Up to immortal things
  In the heavenly day.

Yet she flags and almost faints;—
Can such be meant for me?
Come and see, say the saints.
Saith Jesus, Come and see.
Say the saints, His pleasures please us
Before God and the Lamb.
Come and taste my sweets, saith Jesus—
Be with Me where I am.

CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

August 14.

THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS.

"Their soul shall be as a watered garden: and they shall not sorrow any more at all."—"How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?"—JER. xxxi. 12; JOSHUA xviii. 3.

"And then, said they, we will, if the day be clear, show you the Delectable Mountains......So he looked, and, behold, at a great distance he saw a most pleasant mountainous country, very delectable to behold......and it is as common, said they, as this hill is, to and for all the pilgrims. And when thou comest there, from thence thou mayest see to the gate of the Celestial City."—BUNYAN.

I SEE them far away,—
In their calm beauty, on the evening skies,
Across the golden west their summits rise,
Bright with the radiance of departing day.
And often, ere the sunset light was gone,
Gazing and longing, I have hastened on,

As with new strength, all weariness and pain
Forgotten in the hope those blissful heights to gain.

Heaven lies not far beyond,—
But these are hills of earth, our changeful air
Circles around them, and the dwellers there
Still own mortality's mysterious bond.
The ceaseless contact, the continued strife
Of sin and grace, which can but close with life,
Is not yet ended, and the Jordan's roar
Still sounds between their path and the celestial shore.

But there, the pilgrims say,
On these calm heights, the tumult and the noise
Of all our busy cares and restless joys
Have almost in the distance died away ;—
All the past journey "a right way" appears ;
Thoughts of the future wake no faithless fears ;
And through the clouds, to their rejoicing eyes,
The City's golden streets and pearly gates arise.

Look up, poor fainting heart !
These happy ones, in the far distance seen,
Were sinful wanderers once, as thou hast been—
Weary and sorrowful, as now thou art.
Linger no longer on the lonely plain ;
Press boldly onward, and thou too shalt gain
Their vantage-ground, and then with vigour new
All thy remaining race and pilgrimage pursue.

Ah! far too faint, too poor
Are all our views and aims—we only stand
Within the borders of the promised land,
Its precious things we seek not to secure;
And thus our hands hang down, and oft unstrung
Our harps are left the willow trees among.
Lord, lead us forward, upward, till we know
How much of heavenly bliss may be enjoyed below!

H. L. L.

* * *

August 15.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

"Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full."—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger."—Ps. lxxviii. 25; John vi. 35.

'TWAS August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said,
"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?"
"Bravely!" said he, "for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the Living Bread."—

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hopest for thy home.

M. Arnold.

* * *

August 16.

THANKSGIVING.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Eph. v. 20.

THANKS be to God! to whom earth owes
Sunshine and breeze,
The heath-clad hill, the vale's repose,
Streamlet and seas,
The snow-drop and the summer rose,
The many-voicèd trees.

Thanks for the gladness that entwines
Our path below;
Each sunrise that incarnadines
The cold, still snow;
Thanks for the light of love, which shines
With brightest earthly glow.

Thanks for the sickness and the pain,
Which none may flee;
For loved ones standing now before
The crystal sea;

And for the weariness of heart,
Which only rests in Thee.

Thanks for Thine own thrice blessed word
And Sabbath rest;
Thanks for the hope of glory, stored
In mansions blest;
Thanks for the Spirit's comfort poured
Into the trembling breast.

Thanks, more than thanks, to Him ascend,
Who died to win
Our life, and every trophy rend
From Death and Sin,
Till, when the thanks of earth shall end,
The thanks of heaven begin!

F. R. Havergal.

* * *

August 17.

THE TWO SAYINGS.

"Jesus wept."—"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter."
John xi. 35; Luke xxii. 61.

TWO sayings of the Holy Scriptures beat
Like pulses in the Church's brow and breast;
And by them we find rest in our unrest,
And, heart-deep in salt tears, do yet entreat
God's fellowship as if on heavenly seat.

The first is, "Jesus wept,"—whereon is pressed
Full many a sobbing face that drops its best
And sweetest waters on the record sweet;
And one is when the Christ, denied and scorned,
"Looked upon Peter." Oh, to render plain,
By help of having loved a little and mourned,
That look of sovereign love and sovereign pain,
Which He, who could not sin yet suffered, turned
On him who could reject but not sustain!

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

* * *

August 18.

HEARING, WATCHING, WAITING.

"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."—PROV. viii. 34.

O CHILD of God, so weary with earth's toil
And ceaseless strife,
The Master chooseth thee, for high behest,
And fruitful life.
Oh, gladly wait,
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
To do His bidding, for the day grows late.

Take thou His message, and then hasten back
To His dear feet,
And He will greet thee with His tender love,
And comfort sweet.

Then gladly wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
For the next message, as the day grows late.

And mourn not sorely, if thine errand seems
All fruitless now,—
The message was the Master's, and His mark
Is on thy brow;
And thou didst wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
As the shades gathered, and the day was late.

Not now the time of reckoning, it will come
To thee at last;
And thou wilt smile to think of many hours
All then gone past,
When thou didst wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
To do His bidding, ere it was too late.

Anon.

* * *

August 19.

COMFORTED.

"My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me."—"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."—Ps. lv. 4; lvi. 3.

THERE are who tell me I should be
So firm of faith, so void of fear,
So buoyed by calm, courageous cheer,

(Assured through Christ's security
 There is a place prepared) that I
 Should dare not be afraid to die.

Who holds it cowardice to shrink
 Before the fearful truth—that none
 Of all Time's myriads—never one
Whose feet have crossed the fatal brink,
 Has ever come to breathe our breath
 Again, and tell us what is death?......

Who knows?—God only; on His word
 I wholly rest, I solely lean;
 The single voice that sounds between
The Eternities! No soul hath heard
 One whisper else, one mystic breath
 That can reveal the *why* of death.

I think of all who've passed the strife:
 Pale women, who have failed to face
 With bravery of common grace
Their daily apprehensive life,
 Who yet, with straining arms stretched high
 Through ecstasy, could smile, and die;—

Of little children, who would scare
 To walk beneath the dark alone,
 Unless some hand should hold their own,
Who met the Terror unaware;
 Nor knew, while breathing out their breath.
 The angel whom *they* saw was Death!

And I am comforted; because
  The love that bore these tremblers through
  Can fold its strength about me too,
And I may find my quailing was
  As theirs, a phantom that will fly,
  Dawn-smitten, when I come to die.

Therefore I cleave with simple trust
  Amid my hopes, amid my fears,
  Through the procession of my years,
The years that bear me back to dust,—
  And cry,—"Ah, Christ, if Thou be nigh,
  Strong in Thy strength, I dare to die!"

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

* * *

August 20.

LAZARUS.

"Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth."—JOHN xi. 43, 44.

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
  And home to Mary's house returned,
  Was this demanded—if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
  There lives no record of reply,
  Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not, or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

TENNYSON.

* * *

August 21.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"
1 COR. xv. 55.

VITAL spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame!
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond nature! cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life!

Hark, they whisper—angels say,
"Sister-spirit, come away!"
What is this absorbs me quite,
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?—
Tell me, my soul! can this be death?

The world recedes !—it disappears !—
Heaven opens on my eyes !—my ears
With sounds seraphic ring :
Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !
O grave ! where is thy victory ?
O death ! where is thy sting ?

Pope.

August 22.

THE SEA-SIDE WELL.

ON FINDING A SPRING OF FRESH WATER WITHIN TIDE-MARK ON THE COAST OF ARGYLESHIRE.

"Waters flowed over mine head ; then I said, I am cut off. I called upon thy name, O Lord. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee : thou saidst, Fear not."—Lam. iii. 54, 55, 57.

ONE day I wandered where the salt-sea tide
Backward had drawn its wave,
And found a spring as sweet as e'er hill-side
To wild flowers gave.
Freshly it sparkled in the sun's bright look,
And mid its pebbles strayed,
As if it thought to join a happy brook
In some green glade.

But soon the heavy sea's resistless swell
Came rolling in once more ;
Spreading its bitter o'er the clear sweet well
And pebbled shore.

Like a fair star thick buried in a cloud,
Or life in the grave's gloom,
The well, enwrapped in a deep watery shroud,
Sunk to its tomb.

As one who by the beach roams far and wide
Remnant of wreck to save,
Again I wandered when the salt-sea tide
Withdrew its wave.
And there, unchanged, no taint in all its sweet,
No anger in its tone;
Still, as it thought some happy brook to meet,
The spring flowed on.

While waves of bitterness rolled o'er its head,
Its heart had folded deep
Within itself, and quiet fancies led,
As in a sleep.
Till, when the ocean loosed its heavy chain,
And gave it back to day,
Calmly it turned to its own life again,
And gentle way.

Happy, I thought, that which can draw its life
Deep from the nether springs,
Safe 'neath the pressure, tranquil mid the strife
Of surface things.
Safe—for the sources of the nether springs
Up in the far hills lie;

Calm—for the life its power and freshness brings
Down from the sky.

So, should temptations threaten, and should sin
Roll in its 'whelming flood,
Make strong the fountain of Thy grace, within
My soul, O God!
If bitter scorn, and looks, once kind, grown strange,
With crushing chillness fall,
From secret wells let sweetness rise, nor change
My heart to gall.

When sore Thy hand doth press, and waves of Thine
Afflict me like a sea—
Deep calling deep—infuse from source Divine
Thy peace in me.
And when death's tide, as with a brimful cup,
Over my soul doth pour,
Let hope survive—a well that springeth up
For evermore.

Above my head the waves may come and go,
Long brood the deluge dire,
But life lies hidden in the depths below,
Till waves retire;
Till death, that reigns with overflowing flood,
At length withdraw its sway,
And life rise sparkling in the light of God
And endless day.

DR. JOHN KER.

August 23.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—ROM. viii. 35.

I SAY to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he, and we, and all men move
Under a canopy of love
As broad as the blue sky above;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,
And anguish, are but shadows vain,
That death itself shall not remain.

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led;

Yet, if we will one Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day;

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this,
Yet one word more—they only miss
The winning of that final bliss,

Who will not count it true, that Love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing further make him know,—
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all that seems at strife
With blessing, all with curses rife,
That this *is* blessing, this is life.

R. C. Trench.

* * *

August 24.

FAITH'S REWARD.

"Nathanael answered and saith, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."—John i. 49, 50.

SO did Nathanael, guileless man,
At once, not shamefaced or afraid,
Owning Him God, who so could scan
His musings in the lonely shade;

In his own pleasant fig-tree's shade
Which by his household fountain grew,
Where at noonday his prayer he made
To know God better than he knew.

Oh! happy hours of heavenward thought!
  How richly crowned! how well improved!
In musing o'er the Law he taught,
  In waiting for the Lord he loved……

The childlike faith, that asks not sight,
  Waits not for wonder or for sign,
Believes, because it loves, aright—
  Shall see things greater, things divine.

Heaven to that gaze shall open wide,
  And brightest angels to and fro
On messages of love shall glide,
  'Twixt God above and Christ below.

So still the guileless man is blest,—
  To him all crooked paths are straight;
Him on his way to endless rest
  Fresh, ever-growing strengths await.

God's witnesses, a glorious host
  Compass him daily like a cloud;
Martyrs and seers, the saved and lost,
  Mercies and judgments cry aloud:

Yet shall to him the still small voice,
  That first into his bosom found
A way, and fixed his wavering choice,
  Nearest and dearest ever sound.

KEBLE.

August 25.

POOR PILGRIM.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak."—"When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up."—Rom. xv. 1; Job xxii. 29.

AT noon a wayfarer I met,
And pitied, as my steps drew near;
He bore no heavy burden, yet
Seemed weighted down by grief or fear.

As I o'ertook him, "Friend," I asked,
"Where do you go? Is your way mine?"
(I thought to point one overtasked
To help Almighty and Divine.)

"I am a pilgrim," he replied;
"A pilgrim through this desert land;
I have been sorely, sorely tried,
And dread the night so near at hand."

"A pilgrim! surely no," I said;
"Most surely no! For why assume
A felon's garb, and downcast head
Of pris'ner going to his doom?"

But when I saw his patient face,
I mourned my harsh and cruel tone;
Slack'ning my ardour to his pace,
I drew his arm within my own.

"Pardon, dear pilgrim! but your roll,—
Has it been lost, and your lamp broke?"
"No, no! from winds beyond control
I hid them underneath this cloak."

"Poor pilgrim! let me trim your lamp,
Until it shows you how God sends
Myriads of holy ones to camp,
From morn to night, around His friends."

So we went on. He raised his head,
Nor ever knew that it was night.
"Brother, I did mistake," he said,
"The evening time is very light."

Known but to me and his dear Lord,
I laid my poor, tired pilgrim down;
And tears that fell for my harsh word
Fell on the shadow of a crown.

S. L. F.

* * *

August 26.

THE MISSIONARY'S FAREWELL.

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"—"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."—Rom. x. 14, 15; Isa. vi. 8.

STILL on the shores of home my feet are standing,
But home itself even now behind me lies;

Still my ship's anchor holds—but fast are breaking
Round this sad heart the dearest, strongest ties.

Slowly and painfully those bonds are parting,
Now only known to clasp so close, so strong;—
Fain would the tree grow on, nor bear transplanting
From the loved soil where it has stood so long!

Yonder, where I must go, the earth and heaven
Another aspect will appear to wear,
A fiercer sun will shine in noonday splendour,
And stars unknown light up the darkness there.

The cradle-song, which soothed my childhood's slumbers,
The words of love and prayer, will sound no more;
All harsh will seem the unfamiliar accents
Which greet the stranger on that distant shore.

"Remain, remain!" I hear my dear ones calling,
"Remain among us, loved and loving, still!
Tempt not the wild waves of the stormy ocean,
Tempt not the blinded heathen's wilder will!"

Yes, I would stay, did I not hear another,
A heavenly call, which tells me to depart:
His voice, who lingered not, when love and pity
For helpless, hopeless sinners filled His heart—

His voice I hear; and theirs, the lost, the dying,—
The wail of heathen anguish o'er the sea!
They must not perish thus, unheard, unheeded;
The slaves of Satan must be yet set free!

Lord, I obey ; I go, where Thou appointest,
  A willing servant, to the harvest field.
Nor will I turn again, my post forsaking,
  Though only thorns and briers the toil should yield.

The signal waves—Adieu, my own, my dearest !
  Remember in your prayers the absent one ;
And mourn me not—ye know the Friend Almighty,
  All-wise, All-loving, who has with me gone !

HEINRICH MÖWES. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

* * *

August 27.

WALKING IN LOVE.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."—"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."—1 JOHN iv. 7; EPH. v. 2.

WHEN we seek, with loving heart,
  Each to act a childlike part,
Daily duty, daily care,
For our Lord to do or bear,—

All His pleasure to fulfil,
Do or suffer all His will ;
Serve Him here with earnest love,
Till we dwell with Him above,—

When the ransomed look before,
View by faith the heavenly shore,

Catch the echoes of the song
They shall join in there, ere long,—

Then, of small account appear
Every mortal toil or tear;
Homeward hasting day by day,
What are trials by the way?

He, the great High Priest, draws nigh,
Brings for every want supply;
Healing oil, and cheering wine,
Living water, bread divine.

Then together all rejoice,
Singing praise with heart and voice;
Finding, ere our work be done,
Present heaven on earth begun.

Often, by our Saviour blest
With a sweet sabbatic rest,
Every burden we can bear
To His heart, and leave it there.

And arising, onward haste,
When that blessed hour is past;
Ready, with uplifted hands,
For the Master's next commands.

Ready, at His midnight call,
Joyfully to part from all—
Then, with Him, the festal door
Enter, to go out no more! *Moravian.*

August 28.

DESIRES.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."—Ps. xxxvii. 4.

I WOULD fain all power exert
With the ease of will,
Take in all enjoyment part,
With no sense of ill;
Through Creation's wonders dart,
Yet be calm and still;
Bear affection's warmest heart,
Nor have check nor chill.

But a voice replieth near,
"'Tis not here, 'tis not here!
This is found in higher sphere."

I would fain all duty do,
Nor a fragment leave;
Press to lofty aim in view,
Nor an error grieve;
Only objects right pursue,
Only pure perceive,
Trust, because myself am true;
Love, because believe.

But a voice replieth near,
"'Tis not here, 'tis not here!
This is won in holier sphere."

LORD KINLOCH.

August 29.

THE "NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME."

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."—PHIL. ii. 9, 10.

IN One Name I have found the All in all;
It is enough, and it will never fail.
Here on the height, or there within the vale,
In this my strength I shall not greatly fall.
If on the dark hills here thy fears appal,
O thou mine enemy! or there assail
My fainting heart, yet shall they not prevail,
For on the Name thou dreadest I will call.
Oh then rejoice not! for I shall arise,
And heavenly light shall stream across the gloom,
And heavenly music drown the voice of doom,
And a most blissful prospect cheer mine eyes,—
All from that Name belovèd and adored,
Thy sweet great Name, O Jesus Christ my Lord!

REV. S. J. STONE.

* * *

August 30.

SONG OF THE REDEEMED.

"What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation."—REV. vii. 13, 14.

WE came not in with broad
Full canvas swelling to a steady breeze,

With pennons flying fair, with coffers stored :
For long against the wind, mid heavy seas,
With cordage strained and splintered masts, we drave ;
And o'er our decks had dashed the bitter wave,
And, lightening oft our lading, life to save,
Our costly ventures to the deep were given.
Yes ! some of us were caught, and homewards driven
Upon the storm-wind's wings ; and some, rock-riven
Among the treacherous reefs at anchor flung,
Felt the good ship break under them, and clung
Still to some plank or fragment of its frame
Amid the roaring breakers ;—yet we came.

We came not in with proud,
Firm, martial footstep, in a measured tread,
Slow pacing to the crash of music loud ;
No gorgeous trophies went before, no crowd
Of captives followed us with drooping head ;
No shining laurel sceptred us, nor crowned,
Nor with its leaf our glittering lances bound......
With faces darkened in the battle flame,
Through wind, and sun, and showers of bleaching rain,
With many a wound upon us, many a stain,
We came with steps that faltered ;—yet we came.

* * * *

And as we came to Thee, a sound of war
Rose after us from distant fields,......a cry
Confused and harsh, that rolled to "Victory !"

And seemed upon the darkening heavens to cease;
For as we neared the City, morning broke,
And all along the lofty ramparts woke
One word of greeting, flooding all the ear
And all the heart with solemn music, clear
As of a trumpet talking with us—"Peace!"

Dora Greenwell.

August 31.

BEULAH.

"How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."—"Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land."—Jer. xii. 5; Isa. xliii. 2; Joshua iv. 22.

THE river close beside,—
The deep, dark flood, each pilgrim must pass through!
No Moses' rod these waters to divide;
No bridge, no bark of safety now in view!
Shall we not turn away in shrinking dread,
When told this is the path our weary feet must tread?

Not from the mountain brow
Far in the distance is the river seen:
No; closely following its waters now,
The pathway leads, with but a step between.
Oh, dismal prospect! road of gloom and fear!
How shall my spirit faint when knowing this is near!

Nay, faint not, faithless soul;
  No gloomy shadows rest on Beulah's land.
Calm in the sunshine Jordan's waters roll;
  Calm in the sunshine walk the pilgrim band.
The dark, rough places of their way are past;
The Master giveth here His best things for the last.

The storms have ceased to blow,
  The arrows of the foe have ceased to fall;
Bright visitors celestial come and go,
  With messages of love for each and all.
Beyond the stream the City's glories rise;
No clouds obscure them now from loving, longing eyes.

And pilgrims, one by one,
  Gladly and gently pass the river through;
With smiles and songs of triumph some have gone,
  Some in sweet silence waved a fond adieu.
The Master greets them at the City door;
Joyful they enter in, and shall go out no more.

All pilgrims come not here—
  There are far other fords on Jordan's stream:
Some cross when floods are high, in storm and fear;
  Some hasten onwards in unconscious dream.
It matters little how, if one pierced Hand
Has helped them through the waves, and greets them on the strand.

Yet doubly favoured they
  Who cross the stream from Beulah's peaceful shore.

O Saviour! shall *I* take that pleasant way?
  Shall the storms cease, the foes molest no more?
Or must the clouds, long shadowing the past,
More darkly gather then around me at the last?

I would not seek to know:
  Thou knowest, Lord! Enough if Thou shalt guide
And choose my path,—the valley dark and low,
  The sunny plain, or the steep mountain side,—
Lead on, I follow! I shall fear no ill
In life, in death, my God, if Thou art with me still!

H. L. L.

September 1.

THE SECOND DAY OF CREATION.

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."—GEN. i. 6.

THIS world I deem
But a beautiful dream
Of shadows that are not what they seem,
Where visions arise,
Giving faint surmise
Of the things that shall meet our waking eyes……

I gaze o'erhead
Where Thy hand has spread
For the waters of heaven a crystal bed,
And stored the dew
In its deeps of blue
Which the fires of the sun come tempered through.

Soft they shine
Through that pure shrine,
As beneath the veil of Thy flesh divine

Beams forth the light
That were else too bright
For the feebleness of a sinner's sight.

And such I deem
This world will seem
When we wake from life's mysterious dream,
And burst the shell
Where our spirits dwell
In their wondrous ante-natal cell.

I gaze aloof
On the tissued roof,
Where time and space are the warp and woof,
Which the King of kings
As a curtain flings
O'er the dreadfulness of eternal things;

A tapestried tent,
To shade us meant
From the bare everlasting firmament;
Where the blaze of the skies
Comes soft to our eyes,
Through a veil of mystical imageries.

But could I see
As in truth they be
The glories of heaven that encompass me,
I should lightly hold
The tissued fold
Of that marvellous curtain of blue and gold!

Soon the whole
Like a parched-up scroll
Shall before my amazèd eyes uproll;
And without a screen
At one burst be seen
The Presence wherein I have ever been!

Oh who shall bear
The blinding glare
Of the Majesty that shall meet us there?
What eye may gaze
On the unveiled blaze
Of the light-girdled throne of the Ancient of Days?
Christ us aid!
Himself be our shade,
That in that dread day we be not dismayed!

T. WHYTEHEAD.

September 2.

HARVEST SONG.

"The valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."—Ps. lxv. 13.

A HIGHER wealth by far
Than the deep mine's yellow vein,
Is seen around, in the fair hills crowned
With sheaves of golden grain.

Let the song of praise be poured
In gratitude and joy,

By the rich man, with his garners stored,
And the ragged gleaner boy!

This feast that Nature gives,
Is not for one alone;
'Tis shared by the meanest slave that lives
And the tenant of a throne.

Then glory to the steel
That shines in the reaper's hand,
And thanks to Him who has blessed the seed,
And crowned the harvest land!

ELIZA COOK.

September 3.

SABBATH EVENING MUSINGS.

"O God, thou art my God: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."—Ps. lxiii. 1.

WHAT means this strange emotion,
This longing, pensive sigh,
As here I sit in silence,
And gaze on earth and sky?
The evening bells are chiming
Sweet on the summer air,
The evening lights are gleaming
Soft on the landscape fair;
Hardly an insect murmurs,
Or dove with gentle moan.

I sit within my chamber
All quiet and alone,
The holy page before me;
But eyes and fancies stray;—
What means the dreamlike feeling
Which bears my heart away?

Is it a thought of sadness
That Sabbath rest is o'er,
And week-day cares and labours
Returning as before?
Or can it be that, weary
Of holy rest and prayer,
I long again the burden
Of common life to bear?

Are Memory's spells around me?
Fair visions of the past,—
Of childhood's Sabbath sunshine,
Long dimmed and overcast?
Or can the dear departed
Steal from their home on high?
With silent, tender greetings,
Are spirits passing by?
Or is *my* spirit striving
To break the mortal chain,
And soar, in fond aspirings,
Her Fatherland to gain?

Ah, yes! 'tis here the secret,
The hidden meaning lies,

Of this mysterious sadness
  Which fills my heart and eyes!
When falls the Sabbath silence
  O'er week-day cares and toil,
Then sound the spirit-voices
  Lost in life's vain turmoil;
Then wakes the earnest longing,
  The call within my breast,
For a repose yet deeper
  Than sweetest Sabbath rest;
A love more pure, more tender,
  A joy more full and true,
Than mortal heart has cherished,
  Or mortal breast ere knew,—
A Sabbath morn, whose sunshine
  Fades not with eve away;—
My God! when wilt Thou bring me
  To that eternal day?

CARL GEROK.
(*Free Translation.* H. L. L.)

* * *

September 4.

ON FINDING SOME PENCIL MARKS IN A BOOK OF DEVOTION.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."—Ps. lxxiii. 25.

STRONG words are these—"O Lord! I seek but Thee,
  Not Thine! I ask not comfort, ask not rest;

Give what, and how, and *when* Thou wilt to me,
  I bless Thee—take all back—and be Thou blest."

Sweet words are these—"O Lord! it is Thy love,
  And not Thy gifts, I seek; yet am as one
That loveth so, I prize the least above
  All other worth or sweetness under sun."

And all these words are underscored, and here
  And there a tear has fallen, and left a stain;
The only record, haply, of a tear
  Long wiped from eyes no more to weep again.

And as I gaze, a solemn joy comes o'er me—
  By these deep footprints I can surely guess,
Some pilgrim, by the road that lies before me,
  Hath crossed, long time ago, the wilderness.

With feet oft bruised among its sharp flints, duly
  He turned aside to gather simples here,
And lay up cordials for his faintness—truly
  Now will I track his steps, and be of cheer.

And, wearied, by this wayside fountain's brink
  He sat to rest, and as it there befell
The stone was rolled away, he stooped to drink
  The waters springing up from Life's clear well.

And oft upon his journey, faring sadly,
  He communed with this Teacher from on high;

And, meeting words of promise, meekly, gladly,
Went on his way rejoicing—so will I. D. G.

* * *

September 5.

LOWLY SERVICE.

"I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me."—"Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?...Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee."—Ps. xl. 17; lvi. 8, 12.

INTO His summer garden,
Into His pleasant garden,
In the dawn of the morning, the Master bade me go;
And the place He showed to me
Was beneath a spreading tree,
Where I only saw the sunbeams as they flickered to and fro.

I was glad of that shelter,
That broad-branching shelter;
It was green in that shelter, so quiet and so fair;
Out beyond the cooling shade
Weak flowers droop and fade,
And I was one weaker than the weakest flower there.

Far out amid the sunshine,
The bright, happy sunshine,
They walk in the sunshine, where I shall never be;

And roses red *they* bring
For the Master's welcoming;—
But pale, pale are the roses that grow around me!

Yet, when the Master cometh,
When the dear Master cometh,
In the cool of the evening, to see the garden green,
I too have flowers to give
That in the shadow live,
And lift up their leaves all shining where heaven's dew hath been.

I will bring Him tall lilies,
The white, patient lilies,
Like the crowns of the angels, so stainless and so fair;
I have violets dark and sweet
To lay before His feet,
I have pale flowers that blossom but to scent the night air.

So, when the day shall darken,
When the long day shall darken,
I shall rise up from the shadow, I shall listen for His word;
And oh that it may be—
Looking on my flowers and me,—
"Thou art My good servant, thou hast watched for thy Lord!"

E. C. CLEPHANE.

September 6.

PERFECT FREEDOM.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."—"O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds."—GAL. v. 1; PS. cxvi. 16.

THY service, Lord, is freedom; yet it binds
With strongest chains; the heart around it winds
A self-imposed restraint; Thy freedmen, we
Still wear Thy badge, and joy that all should see
Our will, by firmest bands, in thrall to Thee.

So is our freedom perfect; or will grow
Such in Thy heaven; lacking some part below
Through earth's remaining gyves,—if once there be
A will with Thine in all things to agree,
Then, wholly bound, we shall be wholly free.

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

September 7.

DEATH OF INFANTS.

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God."—"One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father....Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."—LUKE xii. 6; MATT. x. 29, 31.

A JOYFUL child, long years ago,
While yet unknown were death and woe,

What bitter tears were those first shed
Over my dove or sparrow dead!
Then an old stanza brought relief,
It met and soothed my childish grief,—
"The loving Lord forgetteth none,
He knows where each of these has gone."

Passed many a long and weary year,
And still that voice I seemed to hear;
It came, as if from pitying Heaven
A message to my soul were given,
When I have loved and wept beside,
While lovely infants drooped and died;—
Babes, to their mother's heart how dear!
Who scarcely smiled or sorrowed here.
Through the dim past, how I recall
One, first and loveliest of all,
Beautiful stranger! ah, how brief
Thy visit here, of joy and grief!
Then came, with his clear starry eyes,
The brother, who beside her lies.
Another, far across the wave
Finding a birthplace and a grave;
And one, fair child of pain and fear!
Whose sweet eyes never opened here.

Ah! were these only, must we say,
Drops, from Life's ocean cast away?
All vanished—gone! that slumber deep,
Was it in truth eternal sleep?

Or, shrinking from our tears and strife,
Did they awake to nobler life?
Who asks? who now, of all below,
Save one fond heart, would care to know?
And when her grave is by their side,
Who shall recall they lived or died?

Nay, the old comfort comes again,
Faith hears, and echoes back the strain—
Faith in His love, who called, and pressed
The "little children" to His breast:
"Our loving Lord forgetteth none,
He knows where each of these has gone."

META HEUSSER.
From "Alpine Lyrics."

September 8.

"WHEN THE NIGHT AND MORNING MEET."

"Make us glad according to the days wherein thou has afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil."—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Ps. xc. 15; cxvi. 15.

IN the dark and narrow street
Into a world of woe,
Where the tread of many feet
Went trampling to and fro,
A child was born (speak low),
When the night and morning meet.

Full seventy summers back
  Was this—so long ago,
The feet that wore the track
  Are lying straight and low ;
Yet there hath been no lack
  Of passers to and fro.

Within the narrow street
  This Childhood ever played ;
Beyond this narrow street
  This Manhood never strayed ;
  This age sat still and prayed,
Anear the trampling feet.

The sound of ceaseless feet
  Flowed through his life, unstirred
By waters' fall, or fleet
  Wind music, or the bird
Of morn—these sounds are sweet,
  But they were still unheard.

Within the narrow street
  I stood beside a bed,
  I held a dying head,
When the night and morning meet ;
And every word was sweet,
  Though few the words we said.

And as we spoke, dawn drew
  To day—the world was fair

In fields afar, I knew,
  Yet spoke not to him there
Of how the grasses grew,
  Besprent with dew-drops rare.

We spoke not of the sun,
  Nor of this green earth fair;
The soul, whose day was done,
  Had never claimed its share
  In these, and yet its rare
Rich heritage had won.

From the dark and narrow street,
  Into a world of love
A child was born. Speak low,
Speak reverent; for we know
  Not how they meet above,
When the night and morning meet.

Dora Greenwell.

* * *

September 9.

"MY DAYS GO ON."

"While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."—Ps. cxlvi. 2.

TAKE from my head the thorn-wreath brown!
  No mortal grief deserves that crown.

O Supreme Love, chief misery,
The sharp regalia are for Thee
Whose days eternally go on !

For us, whatever's undergone,
Thou knowest, willest what is done ;
Grief may be joy misunderstood,
Only the Good discerns the good ;
I trust Thee while my days go on.

Whatever's lost, it first was won,—
We will not struggle nor impugn ;
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show
more clear ;
I praise Thee while my days go on.

I praise Thee while my days go on ;
I love Thee while my days go on ;
Through dark and dearth, through fire
and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.

And having in Thy life-depth thrown
Being and suffering (which are one),
As a child drops his pebble small
Down some deep well, and hears it fall,
Smiling—so I. Thy days go on !

E. B. Browning.

September 10.

"MY FATHER KNOWS."

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him."—"He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—MATT. vi. 8; JOB xxiii. 10.

I CANNOT see His skies above,
  For autumn mists obscure the west;
But in the shelter of His love
  I fain would hush my heart to rest.
Though some bright hopes have tenderly
  Been gathered to their last repose,
This sweet remembrance comforts me,
    "He knows."

For *why* the summer came and went
  He shows not yet to me, His child;
But patience, richer than content,
  Broods softly where the summer smiled;
And where the last bright leaf shall fall,
  The last pale blossom shall repose,
Is safe with Him who loveth all,—
    "He knows!"

Amid the hush of finished things
  He hears His children's feeblest prayer,
The tender shadowing of His wings
  Extends beyond their utmost care;

And loss that ne'er on earth grows less,
With deep and holy meaning glows,
Since loss, and pain, and homelessness,
"He knows!"

I cannot tell if cross or crown
Lies next within His thought for me;
It matters not, since faith hath grown
So strong in His dear sympathy.
The clouds that o'er my pathway move,
The joys beyond its final close,
All rise from His deep heart of love,—
"He knows!"

Mary Rowles.

* * *

September 11.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—Eccles. xii. 7.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide;—
Careless tenants they!

All within is dark as night;
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door, the shutters close;
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark, deserted house.

Come away; no more of mirth
Is here, or merry-making sound;
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away—for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a City glorious,—
A great and distant City,—have sought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they had stayed with us!

TENNYSON.

* * *

September 12.

"LOVE NEVER FAILETH."

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."—1 JOHN iv. 7, 8.

THEY sin who tell us love can die.
With life all other passions fly—
All others are but vanity.
In heaven ambition cannot dwell,
Nor avarice in the vaults of hell:

Earthly these passions of the earth,
They perish where they had their birth.
But love is indestructible,
Its holy flame for ever burneth;
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times opprest,
It here is tried and purified,
Then hath in heaven its perfect rest.
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the harvest-time of love is there.
Oh, when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for sighs and tears,
  The day of woe, the sleepless night,
For all her sorrows, all her fears,
  An over-payment of delight?

SOUTHEY.

* * *

September 13.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

"O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."—Ps. cxxxvi. 1.

I WALK with bare, hushed feet the ground
  Some tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
  The love and power of God……

More than the schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know;
Too dark they cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show……

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within,
I hear with groan and travail-cries
The world confess its sin,—

Yet in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings,—
I know that God is good……

I dimly guess, from blessings known,
Of greater out of sight,
And with the chastened Psalmist own
His judgments, too, are right.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise;
Assured alone that death or life
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisèd reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;

I can but give the gifts He gave,
  And plead His love, for love.......

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
  If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me, that my feet may gain
  The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
  Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me, if too close I lean
  My human heart on Thee!

WHITTIER.

* * *

September 14.

BEFORE THE DAWN.

"Verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."—MATT. xiii. 17.

O THOU that baskest in the ray
  So pure, so warm, so clear,
Of the thrice blessed Christian day
  That shines around us here,
Let thankful thought a moment be
  From thine own bliss withdrawn,
To weep for those who longed to see,
  But died before, the dawn.

The scattered gleams at Nature's feast,
On wisdom's scroll, they nursed;
They turned their faces to the East,
And longed for day to burst.
They saw, by their uncertain light,
The dazzling darkness yawn;
They pondered, awestruck, in the night,
But died before the dawn.

Yet, was there ne'er a hovering cloud
Where mountain peaks aspire,
While the dark earth lay in her shroud,
Tinged by an unseen fire?
And did there ne'er a quivering lark,
Piercing its airy way,
Catch on its breast a ruby spark
From the unrisen day?

Hush! be content! have faith in God;—
The Sun that shines to save
Once set upon the Cross in blood,
And rose—but from the grave.
So deep Divine compassion glows;
Thence are *our* yearnings drawn,
Or we had never wept for those
Who died before the dawn.

A. R. Cousin.

September 15.

UNIVERSAL PRAISE.

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."—Ps. cl. 6.

YE holy angels bright, who wait at God's right hand,
Or through the realms of light fly at your Lord's command,
Assist our song!
For else the theme too high doth seem
For mortal tongue.

Ye blessed souls at rest, who ran this earthly race,
And now, from sin released, behold the Saviour's face,
God's praises sound,
As in His light, with sweet delight,
Ye do abound!

Ye saints who toil below, adore your heavenly King!
And onward as ye go some joyful anthem sing;
Take what He gives,
And praise Him still, through good or ill,
Who ever lives.

My soul, bear thou *thy* part, triumph in God above,
And with a well-tuned heart sing thou the songs of love!
Let all thy days,
Till life shall end, whate'er He send,
Be filled with praise!

RICHARD BAXTER.

September 16.

BENEATH THE CROSS.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—GAL. vi. 14.

BENEATH the Cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty Rock within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat and the burden of the day.

O safe and happy shelter! O refuge tried and sweet!
O trysting-place, where Heaven's love and Heaven's justice meet!
As to the holy patriarch that wondrous dream was given,
So seems my Saviour's Cross to me—a ladder up to heaven!

There lies beneath the shadow, but on the farther side,
The darkness of an awful grave, that gapes both deep and wide;
And there between us stands the Cross, two arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way from that eternal grave.

Upon the Cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One who suffered there for me;

And from my smitten heart, with tears, two wonders I confess,—
The wonder of His glorious love, and my own unworthiness.

I take, O Cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by, to know nor gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the Cross.

E. C. Clephane.

* * *

September 17.

KYRIE ELEISON!

"And many charged Bartimæus that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me."—Mark x. 48.

SAVIOUR, I come to Thee,
As at Thy call of old the weary came,—
Still the old toil and weariness for me,
Is not Thy love and pity still the same?

I come—Thou knowest all,
I need not linger on the tale again;
In silent tears before Thee I may fall,
Nor shall the mute appeal be made in vain.

The wayside beggar blind,
The weeping sinner who embraced Thy feet,

The trembling one who touched Thy robe behind—
All these obtained a smile, a blessing sweet.

And countless thousands more,
Through the long vanished ages of the past,
Have sought Thy mercy's unexhausted store,
And found it overflowing to the last.

Shall *I* implore in vain?
Thy word of promise is my only plea:
Nothing I bring but sin, and grief, and pain;
My hope, my help, can only come from Thee.

Still Thou art passing by,
Jesus of Nazareth! and oft a throng
Of glad disciples press Thy footsteps nigh,
And sing Thy praises as they move along.

Alas! *I* dare not join
That joyful company,—I can but wait
Alone, in hope and prayer, for grace divine,
Like the blind beggar at the open gate.

When multitudes drew near,
Bringing their sick—Lord, Thou didst heal them all;
Yet, ever willing, wouldest turn, to hear
And answer, at a lonely suppliant's call.

Have mercy, Lord! Once more
Hear that petition on Thy throne above!
Mercy to pardon, heal, revive, restore—
Thou canst give all, Thou wilt, for Thou art love!

H. L. L.

September 18.

FROM "A SONG OF JOY AND PAIN."

"The word which God sent, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), whom they slew and hanged on a tree."—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."—ACTS x. 36, 39; 1 PETER ii. 24.

HAIL, blessed Cross! how bold
Thou makest me! how strong! No more I weep
O'er giant cities now the dragon's fold,
O'er mighty empires breathed to dust away;
No more a tearful chronicle I keep
Of all that passes ere our mortal day
Hath passed; nor grieve that in earth's fruitful, deep,
Warm soil *my* life hath struck but tender hold:
All things must change, and into ruin, cold,
And darkness pass and perish; yet, behold!
All fades not with the fading leaf. To me
The Lord hath showed a tree!

And many a leaf on me
Hath fallen from off this Tree
Of healing power! I know
Not yet how near the skies
Its lofty stem will rise;
Nor guess how deep below,
To what drear vaults of woe

Its roots will pierce: I see
Its boughs spread wide and free,
And fowls of every wing
Beneath them build and cling.
Hail, blessed Cross! I see
My life grow green in thee!
My life, that hidden, mute,
Lives ever in thy root,
When life fails utterly;
All hail, thou blessed Tree!

DORA GREENWELL.

* * *

September 19.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

"There is a certain people scattered abroad."—"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."—"Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"—ESTHER iii. 8; 1 PETER ii. 10; MARK iv. 40.

PEOPLE, scattered abroad,
Poor people of God, who would fain see His face,
Hardly ye follow the road;
So much to hinder the race,—
Poor people of God!

And yet, why are ye weak?
The God whom ye serve, is not He your support?
Do not His promises speak?

Can ye not trust as ye ought,—
Say, people of God?

What! has His hand lost power?
Is that Arm shortened which holdeth the spheres?
Gives He a broken tower
To shelter you from your fears?
Oh no, people of God!

Wherefore, then, dread the foe
That a word of His mouth can bring to the dust?
When He can miracles do,
Can ye not wait and trust?
Why not, people of God?

People, fighting your way,
Poor people of God, let faith be your host.
Doubt not, this war shall pay
Very much more than it cost.
Yes, believe, people of God!

From the French.

* * *

September 20.

AFTER A QUAKERS' MEETING.

" Be silent [*marginal*] to the Lord, and wait patiently for him.'
Ps. xxxvii. 7.

SILENT! Then ye heard not
My Belovèd's greeting!

Knew not how we kept our tryst,
The parting and the meeting.

Heard ye not my moaning,
As I told my sorrow?
Nor His blessed word of hope,
"Joy cometh on the morrow"?

Heard ye not the whisper
Of my soul confessing?
Nor His faithful "I forgive;
Peace to thee, and blessing"?

Then indeed was silence!
Surely you could hear it,
With its low "Amen! Amen!'
Falling on my spirit.

The Amen grew louder,
Like an anthem pealing,
As it answered to the voice,
All His will revealing—

Will, that I should suffer,
Share His crown of sorrow!
Loving service give to-day,
Reign with Him to-morrow!

Heard ye that "To-morrow!"
As the angels o'er us
Sang in hallelujahs loud
The triumphant chorus?

Heard ye that "for ever!"
  As in holy vision
My Belovèd bore my soul
  Far to faith's fruition?

Heard ye His low promise,
 "Never will I leave thee;
Be thou faithful unto death,
  A crown of life I give thee"?

Oh then call not "silent"
  Hours so full of singing!
Even now, from wall to wall
  Hear the echoes ringing!

Anon.

* * *

September 21.

THE AUTUMN SONGSTER.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—Phil. iv. 11-13.

THE morning mist is cleared away,
  Yet still the face of heaven is gray:
Nor yet the autumnal breeze has stirred this grove;
  Faded yet full, a paler green
  Skirts soberly the tranquil scene,
The red-breast warbles round this leafy cove.

Sweet messenger of "calm decay,"
Saluting sorrow as you may,
As one still bent to find or make the best,
In thee, and in this quiet mead,
The lesson of sweet peace I read,
Rather in all to be resigned than blest.

'Tis a low chant, according well
With the soft solitary knell,
As homeward from some grave beloved we turn,
Or by some holy death-bed dear,
Most welcome to the chastened ear
Of her whom Heaven is teaching how to mourn.

O cheerful, tender strain! the heart
That duly bears with you its part,
Singing so thankful to the dreary blast,
Though gone and spent its joyous prime,
And on the world's autumnal time,
Mid withered hues and sere, its lot be cast:

That is the heart for thoughtful seer,
Watching, in trance nor dark nor clear,
The appalling future as it nearer draws:
His spirit calmed the storm to meet,
Feeling the rock beneath his feet,
And tracing through the cloud the eternal Cause.

That is the heart for watchman true
Waiting to see what God will do,

As o'er the Church the gathering twilight falls:
  No more he strains his wistful eye,
  If chance the golden hours be nigh,
By youthful Hope seen beaming round her walls.

  Forced from his shadowy paradise,
  His thoughts to Heaven the steadier rise:
There seek his answer when the world reproves:
  Contented in his darkling round,
  If only he be faithful found,
When from the east the eternal morning moves.

Keble.

September 22.

THE HARVEST FIELDS.

"And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee."—Ruth ii. 4.

WORKING away at the harvest, reaping the ripening grain,
Laying it down in ridges like the men of an army slain,
Foremost in toil is the reaper, with the sweat on his bronzèd brow—
God bless the hand of the reaper, and send him vigour enow!

Binding the sheaves into bundles, bending so meekly
and low,
Come the patient, orderly women, chattering on as
they go;
Following after the reapers come mothers, sisters, and
wives—
God bless the orderly binders, who bind the staff of
our lives!

After are coming the young men, lusty in sinew and
limb,
Throwing the sheaves on the waggons, and building the
loads so trim.
On the ricks are binding the old men, sage and practised of eye—
God bless the pitchers and rickers who are storing His
treasures by!

Come the little, prattling children, when the field is
carried and clear,
Gathering up the fragments, and storing them ear by
ear.—
So each one joins in providing against winter's tempest
and frost;
And the small birds gather the fragments, that nothing
of God's be lost.

E. A. S.

September 23.

MY NEST.

"Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand."—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world passeth away."—JOB xxix. 18; 1 JOHN ii. 15–17.

OH, where shall I build my nest?
This earth is so sorrow-rife!
Oh, I cannot stay,
I must fly away
To build in the Tree of Life!
I built in the cave of dreams,
Where spirits were wont to hide;
But the nest was borne
By a wave of scorn
Far out on the whirling tide.

I flew to the house of mirth,
To build in its sunny eaves;
But a rainy day
Washed the nest away
And filled it with faded leaves.
My nest in the house of pride
Wherein I had put my trust,
When the rafters fell
In the tempest swell,
Was lost in a heap of dust.

I built me a lowly nest,—
'Twas hid in the field of toil;

But the foot of hate
Or the hand of fate
Hath crushed it beneath the soil.
I chose in the field of care
The heart of a golden sheaf;
But the harvest wain
With its load of grain
Hath left me in homeless grief.
I built in the hedge of strife
Whose thicket the bramble weaves;
But my joys were few,
For the thorns came through
My lining of scented leaves!......

O bird that can find no nest,
Poor wanderer, fly with me!
For a Brother born,
Who hath felt the thorn,
Hath built a sweet nest for thee!
'Tis not in the cave of dreams,
'Tis not in the eaves of mirth,
Nor where darkness lies,
Nor where sorrow sighs,
Among the low fields of earth.
'Tis built in the Tree of Life;
For ever thy toil may cease;
It is all love-lined
From His breast so kind
With down of eternal peace!

Mrs. Merrylees.

September 24.

FROM THE "CENTURY OF COUPLETS."

"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies."—Ps. xxv. 10.

GOD'S dealings still are love, His threatenings are alone
Love now compelled to take an altered, sterner tone.

When thou hast thanked thy God for every blessing sent,
What time will then remain for murmur or lament?

Their windows and their doors some close, and murmuring say,
"The light of heaven ne'er sought into my house a way."

God often would enrich, but finds not where to place
His treasure, nor in hand nor heart a vacant place.

Some are resigned to go; might we such grace attain
That we should need our resignation to remain.

God's loudest threatenings speak of love and tenderest care;
For who, that meant his blow to light, would say, "Beware!"

Ill fares the child of heaven, who will not entertain
On earth the stranger's grief, the exile's sense of pain.

R. C. TRENCH.

September 25.

THE SWALLOWS OF CITEAUX.

"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest."—"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."—MICAH ii. 10; HEB. xiii. 14.

UNDER eaves, against the towers,
All the spring, their muddy bowers
Swallows build about Citeaux.
Round the chapter-house and hall,
From the dawn to evenfall,
They are fluttering to and fro,

On their never-flagging wing;
With the psalms the brethren sing
Blends their loud incessant cry;
In and out the plastered nest,
Never taking thought of rest,
Chattering these swallows fly.

* * * *

To the Abbot then complain
Pious monks,—"Shall these remain
To disturb us at our prayers?
Bid us nests and eggs destroy!
Then the birds will not annoy
Any more our deafened ears!"

Quoth the Abbot smiling, "Say,
Have not we, too, homes of clay
Quite as fragile, not more fair,

Brothers? and shall we resolve
Their tabernacles to dissolve,
  Asking God our own to spare?"

Not another word of blame,—
But they turned away in shame.
  So the little birds had peace,
And the parapets among
Built, and laid, and hatched their young,
  Making wonderful increase.

When declined the evening sun,
When the yellow harvest done,
  Sat the swallows in a row
On the ridging of the roof,
Patiently, as in behoof
  Of a license ere they'd go.

Forth from out the western door
Came the Abbot; him before
  Went a brother with his crook,
And a boy a bell who rung
And a silver censer swung,
  Whilst another bore the book.

Then the Abbot raised his hand,
Looking to the swallow band,
  Saying, "*Ite, Missa est!*
Christian birds, depart in peace,
As your cares of summer cease;
  Swallows, enter on your rest.

"Now the winter snow must fall,
Wrapping earth as with a pall,
And the stormy winds arise—
Go to distant lands, where glow
Brighter suns, where falls not snow
From the ever-azure skies.

"Go! remind us of the road
To the sweet unknown abode
In the heavenly Blessed Isles,
Whither we shall speed some day,
Leaving crumbling homes of clay,
For where eternal summer smiles.

"Go in peace! your hours have run;
Go! the day of work is done;
Go in peace, my sons!" he said.—
Then the swallows spread the wing,
Making all the welkin ring
With their cry, and southward sped.

S. Baring-Gould.

September 26.

THE DESIRE TO DEPART.

"Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise."
—1 Kings xi. 21, 22.

AND thus our hearts appeal to them,
When we behold our dearest rise,

And look towards Jerusalem
  With strangely kindling eyes.

And thus we vainly seek to hide
  With the poor curtain of our love
The shining Gates that open wide,
  To welcome our sweet saints above.

Yet still to them, from that bright Land,
  Through our thin tent the Glory gleams;
Already lost to us they stand
  Wrapped in a mist of golden dreams.

For ah! the Master is so fair,
  His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
  Can never rest on earth again;

And they who see Him risen afar
  At God's right hand to welcome them,
Forgetful stand of home and land,
  Desiring fair Jerusalem......

"What have ye lacked, beloved, with us,"
  We murmur heavily and low,
"That ye should rise with kindling eyes,
  And be so fain to go?"

And tenderly the answer falls
  From lips that wear the smile of Heaven,—

“ Dear ones,” they say, “ we pass this day
To Him by whom your love was given ;

“ And in His Presence clear and true,
We answer you with hearts that glow,—
No good thing have we lacked with you :
Howbeit, let us go ! ”

And even as they speak, their thoughts
Are wandering upward to the Throne.
Ah, God ! we see, at length, how free
All earthly ties must leave Thine own !

Yet, kneeling low in darkened homes,
And weeping for the treasure spent,
We bless Thee, Lord, for that sweet word
Our dear ones murmured as they went.

It was not that our love was cold,
That earthly lights were burning dim,
But that the Shepherd from His Fold
Had smiled, and drawn them unto Him

Praise God the Shepherd *is* so sweet !
Praise God the Country *is* so fair !—
We could not hold them from His feet—
We can but haste to meet them there.

B. M.

September 27.

A STRAY SUNBEAM.

"With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."—"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts."—PS. xxxvi. 9; 2 COR. iv. 6.

AS, one dark morn, I trod a forest glade,
A sunbeam entered at the farther end,
And ran to meet me through the yielding shade,
As one who in the distance sees a friend,
And, smiling, hurries to him;—but mine eyes,
Bewildered by the change from dark to bright,
Received the greeting with a quick surprise
At first, and then with tears of pure delight:
For sad my thoughts had been—the tempest's wrath
Had gloomed the night, and made the morrow gray;
That heavenly guidance humble sorrow hath
Had turned my feet into that forest way,
Just when His morning light came down the path,
Among the lonely woods at early day.

CHARLES TURNER.

* * *

September 28.

THE TWO FOUNTAINS.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
REV. xxii. 17.

THERE'S a well in the land of the date-tree and palm,
Where the Arab pursues his wild war of alarm,

Where the Bedouin wanders in search of his prey ;
And the name of that fountain is, "Drink, and away !"

On, weary, lone traveller, onward in haste,
Nor stay by the brink of that well, save to taste ;
To rest there awhile, nay, one moment's delay,
May be death to the pilgrim,—then, "drink, and away !"

'Tis a spot like an island of verdure and bloom,
A rose in the desert—a light in the gloom ;
He bends at the fount, but its waves seem to say,
In musical numbers, "Haste ! drink, and away !"

The horizon is clear, the sun mounts on high,
No foe can the traveller round him descry ;
But he thinks of the Arab, nor dareth to stay,
Just stoops at the fountain to "drink, and away !"

There's a well in the country of suff'ring and grief,
To the parched and the weary its waves bring relief,
Unceasingly flows its pure crystalline tide ;
And the name of this fountain is, "Drink, and abide !"

O wanderer o'er mountain, o'er valley and moor,
Neglected and friendless, unhappy and poor,
Here's elixir indeed ! Then turn thee aside,
And drink of this fountain, yea, "drink, and abide !"

Think not to exhaust this perennial spring,
Think not as a payment your treasure to bring,—

For the King, who has spoken, His words ne'er belied,
" Freely drink of this fountain, yea, drink, and abide ! "

Round the fountains of earth there is danger and death,
Their sources may fail, like thine own fleeting breath ;
But exhaustless these waters, whate'er may betide,
Ye may drink at this Fountain, yea, " drink, and abide ! "

Anon.

* * *

September 29.

VEILED ANGELS.

"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me...It is good for me that I have been afflicted ; that I might learn thy statutes."—Ps. cxix. 75, 71.

UNNUMBERED blessings, rich and free,
Have come to us, our God, from Thee.

Sweet tokens, written with Thy name,
Bright angels from Thy face they came.

Some came with open faces bright,
Aglow with heaven's own living light ;

And some were veiled, trod soft and slow,
And spoke in voices grave and low.

Veiled Angels, pardon ! if with fears
We met you first, and many tears.

We take you to our hearts no less ;
We know you come to teach and bless.

We know how radiant and how kind
Your faces are, those veils behind.

We know those veils, one happy day,
In earth or heaven, shall drop away,

And we shall see you as ye are,
And learn why thus ye sped from far.

But what the joy that day shall be,
We know not yet; we wait to see.

For this, O angels, well we know,
The way ye came, our souls shall go;

Up to the Love from which ye come,
Back to our Father's blessed home.

And bright each face, unveiled, shall shine,
Lord, when the veil is rent from Thine!

MRS. CHARLES.

* * *

September 30.

THE CELESTIAL CITY.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."—"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."—REV. xxi. 2; Ps. cxxii. 2.

JERUSALEM the glorious,
The glory of the Elect!

O dear and future vision,
That eager hearts expect!
Even now by faith I see thee,
Even here thy walls discern;
To thee my thoughts are kindled,
And strive, and pant, and yearn.
And though my body may not,
My spirit seeks thee fain,
Till flesh and earth return me
To earth and flesh again......
Thy loveliness oppresses
All human thought and heart,
And none, O peace, O Sion,
Can sing thee as thou art!

* * * *

Jerusalem, exulting
On that securest shore,
I hope thee, wish thee, sing thee,
And love thee evermore!
I ask not for my merit,
I seek not to deny
My merit is destruction,
A child of wrath am I;
But yet with Faith I venture,
And Hope, upon my way;
For those perennial guerdons
I labour night and day.
The best and dearest Father
Who made me and Who saved,

Bore with me in defilement,
  And from defilement laved—
When in His strength I struggle
  For very joy I leap,
When in my sin I totter,
  I weep, or try to weep;
And grace, sweet grace celestial,
  Shall all its love display,
And David's Royal Fountain
  Purge every sin away.

* * * *

O sweet and blessed Country,
  Shall I ever see thy face?
O sweet and blessed Country,
  Shall I ever win thy grace?
I *have* the hope within me
  To comfort and to bless;
Shall I ever win the prize itself?
  O tell me, tell me, Yes!

Exult, O dust and ashes,
  The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His for ever,
  Thou shalt be, and thou art!
Exult, O dust and ashes,
  The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His for ever,
  Thou shalt be, and thou art!

BERNARD OF CLUNY.
(*Tr.* NEALE.)

October 1.

AUTUMN VOICES.

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."—Ps. xvi. 6.

VOICES of autumn, I hear you again,
Through the dark forest, across the wide plain;
Deep in the valley, and high on the hill,
In the old places all murmuring still.

Leaves slowly falling, and streams rushing fast,
Evening breeze moaning, and night's fitful blast,—
All the old voices again I can hear;
Summer has passed away, winter is near.

Once, oh! how mournfully sounded each tone,
Telling of happiness ended and flown!
Youth and hope vanishing, joys passing by,
Age stealing onward, or death drawing nigh!

Now it is over, that sadness and pain.—
With the old voices it comes not again;
He who is gladdened by morning's bright ray
Thinks not of starlight then fading away.

Since the "glad tidings" spoke peace to this heart,
Life's darkest shadows have seemed to depart;
All Nature's voices one story have told,
Goodness unchanging, to-day as of old.

Autumn winds sweeping o'er fields brown and bare
Echo the reapers' songs lately heard there;
Autumn floods rushing by garner and store
Tell me of treasures in danger no more;

Flowers in their fading, and leaves as they fall,
Long days of brightness and beauty recall;—
Why should I sorrow that these are now past?
Heaven's cloudless summer for ever shall last.

Oh that life's autumn, like Nature's, may bring
Some precious harvest from summer and spring!
Fruits, which the Master may deign to approve,
Laid on His altar, in meekness and love!

H. L. L.

* * *

October 2.

THE TRAVELLER AT SUNSET.

"I go the way of all the earth."—"Let me take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return."—1 KINGS ii. 2; JOB x. 20, 21.

THE shadows grow and deepen round me,—
I feel the dew fall in the air;

The muezzin of the darkening thicket,
  I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.

The evening mind is sad with farewells,
  And loving hands unclasp from mine;
Alone I go to meet the darkness,
  Across an awful boundary-line.

As from the lighted hearths behind me
  I pass with slow, reluctant feet,
What waits me in the land of strangeness?
  What face shall smile, what voices greet?

I shrink from unaccustomed glory,
  I dread the myriad-voicèd strain,—
Give me the unforgotten faces,
  And let my lost ones speak again!

He will not chide my mortal yearning,
  Who is our Brother and our Friend,
In whose full life, divine and human,
  The heavenly and the earthly blend.

No fitting ear is mine to listen
  An endless anthem's rise and fall;
No curious eye is mine to measure
  The pearl gate and the jasper wall.

I go to find my lost and mourned-for
  Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still,
And all that Hope and Faith foreshadow
  Made perfect in Thy holy will.

WHITTIER.

October 3.

KNOCKING, EVER KNOCKING.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."—Rev. iii. 20.

"KNOCKING, knocking, ever knocking—
Who is there?"
"'Tis a pilgrim, strange and kingly,
Never such was seen before;
Ah, sweet soul, for such a wonder,
Undo the door!"

"No, that door is hard to open,
Hinges rusty, latch is broken;
Bid Him go.
Wherefore with that knocking dreary
Scare the sleep of one so weary?
Say Him, No!—

"Knocking, knocking, ever knocking—
What! still there?"
"O sweet soul, but once behold Him,
With the glory-crownèd hair,
And those eyes, so strange and tender,
Waiting there;
Open, open! Once behold Him—
Him, so fair!"

"Ah, that door! Why wilt Thou vex me,
Coming ever to perplex me?

For the key is stiffly rusty,
And the bolt is clogged and dusty;
Many-fingered ivy vine
Seals it fast with twist and twine;
Weeds of years and years before
Choke the passage of that door.

"Knocking, knocking! What! still knocking?
He still there?
What's the hour? The night is waning—
In my heart a drear complaining,
And a chilly, sad unrest.
Ah! this knocking! It disturbs me,
Scares my sleep with dreams unblest.
Give me rest!"

"Rest, dear soul, He longs to give thee;
Thou hast only dreamed of pleasure—
Dreamed of gifts and golden treasure,
Dreamed of jewels in thy keeping,
Waked to weariness of weeping;
Open to thy soul's one Lover,
All thy weariness is over.
The true gifts He brings have seeming
More than all thy faded dreaming."

Did she open? doth she? will she?
So, as wondering we behold,
Grows the picture* to a sign
Pressed upon your soul and mine;

* Hunt's "Light of the World."

For in every breast that liveth
Is that strange mysterious door,—
The forsaken and betangled,
Ivy-gnarled and weed-bejangled,
There the piercèd Hand still knocketh,
And with ever patient watching,
With the sad eyes true and tender,
And the glory-crownèd hair,—
Still a God is waiting there.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe.

October 4.

DESDICHADO.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."--Ps. xiv. 1.

WEEP not for them who weep
For friend or lover taken hence, or child
That falls mid early flowers and grass asleep,
Untempted, undefiled ;—

Mourn not for them that mourn
For sin's keen arrow with its rankling smart,—
God's hand will bind again what He hath torn,
He heals the broken heart.

But weep for him, whose eye
Sees in the midnight skies a starry dome
Thick sown with worlds that whirl and hurry by,
And give the heart no home.

Who hears, amid the dense
Loud trampling crash and outcry of this wild,
Thick jungle-world of drear magnificence,
No voice which says, *My child!*

Who marks through earth and space
A strange dumb pageant pass a vacant shrine;
And feels within his inmost soul a place
Unfilled by the Divine!

DORA GREENWELL.

October 5.

LAST PRAYERS.

"Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."—LUKE xv. 21.

NO crown, no palms for me!
These are for victors in the fight; but I
Have been the vanquished one in every field,—
O Saviour! who hast hope for such revealed!
Low at Thy mercy-seat behold me lie!

Turn not Thy face away!
Deal not in wrath with Thine unworthy child!
Yes, I have sinned; yet there is grace with Thee—
Thou givest mercy, pardon full and free,
To fallen wanderers on the desert wild.

No thought of *triumph* now!
That dream is over—rest is all I crave;
A little peace, after such deadly strife,
Some leaves of healing from the Tree of Life,—
A glimpse of hope and heaven beyond the grave!

And for what yet remains
Of my sad pilgrimage, grant, O my God,
Meek, humble faith, to suffer and be still;
Meekly to watch Thy hand, to do Thy will;
Humbly to bow beneath Thy chastening rod.

Dark stream of life, rush on
To the eternal ocean, full and fast!
If only o'er the waves may fly the Dove
Of heavenly peace, and beckon from above,
To where a pardoned soul shall rest at last!

META HEUSSER.
From "Alpine Lyrics."

October 6.

THE MAN AT THE GATE.*

"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—MATT. vii. 7.

IN summer and winter, in calm and storm,
When the morning dawns, and the night falls late,
We may catch, if we will, the steadfast form
Of the Man that watches beside the Gate......

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* See Bunyan.

It was afternoon, and the sun was low,
  And the troubled winds sobbed long and loud,
As an old man tottered across the snow
  Which wrapt the earth in a bitter shroud;

He knocked with a withered, trembling hand:
"I can but perish at last," he said,
"For the cruel night comes fast on the land,
  And the morning will find me cold and dead.

"O Thou that watchest beside the Gate,
  Had I come to Thee in the days gone by
Thou hadst received me; but now, too late,
  I lay me down on Thy threshold to die.

"I have fought and finished an evil fight,
  I have earned the deadly wages of sin;
It is hard to die in the snow to-night,
  But no man is willing to take me in."

The sun was low in the changing west,
  The shadows were heavy from hill and tree,
As the Watchman opened the Gate of rest,—
"I am willing, with all My heart," said He……

And at midnight there came the voice of one
  Who had crept to the Gate through the blinding
      snow,
And who moaned at the Gate, as one undone
  Might moan at the sight of the last dread woe.

A woman's voice; and it rose and fell
On the muffled wings of the snowy night,
With a trembling knocking which seemed to tell
Of one who was chilled and spent outright.

"I wove the crown for the Brow divine,
I pierced the Hand that was stretched to save,
I dare not pray that the moon may shine
To show me the print of the nails I drave.

"I beat this night on my sinful breast,
I dare not pray Him to succour me."
But the Watchman opened the Gate of rest,—
"I am willing, with all My heart," said He......

Thus day and night they are pressing nigh,
With tears and sighs, to the heavenly Gate,
Where the Watchman stands in His majesty,
With a patience which never has said, "Too late!"

Let the sorrowful children of want and sin
Draw near to the Gate, whence none depart;
Let the nations arise and enter in,
For the Lord is willing, with all His heart.

B. M.

October 7.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS.

"He hath made every thing beautiful in his time."—"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever."—ECCLES. iii. 11; ISA. xl. 8.

O AUTUMN! fair, pensive evening
Of the long year-day, in thee
A natural, gentle emblem
Of life in its evening I see.

The faded forests are silent—
The birds with their songs have flown;
As the confident proud aspirings
And visions of youth are gone.

No longer the gay flower-mantle
O'er meadow and hill is spread;
So youth's gay charms and beauty,
With its fleeting steps, have fled.

Not for shade or fragrant blossoms
The traveller looks to-day,
But ripe fruits and bracing breezes,
To cheer on his toilsome way.

While over his head seems smiling
The deep, bright azure above;
Like eyes that have done with weeping,
Reflecting heaven's peace and love.

And the sunbeams which shine so brightly
  Oppress and consume no more;
Like love in its bliss remaining,
  When passion's fond dream is o'er.

O Autumn, the year's calm evening!
  Let me ever behold in thee
A beautiful, soothing emblem
  Of all my own life should be!

SPITTA. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

October 8.

THE MERCHANT.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—MATT. xiii. 45, 46.

ONCE a merchant travelled, far and wide,
  Over mountain-chains and ocean's tide;
Slighted and despised on every hand,
Wearily he passed from land to land.

Not with treasure treasures to acquire,
Seemed the wanderer's purpose or desire;
Gold and silver he regarded not,—
Pearls alone with eagerness he sought.

Many were produced to meet his call;—
Strictly he examined, weighed them all;
Nothing could deceive, or please his eye,
Calmly he surveyed, and passed them by.

Sadly he pursued his search around,—
Ah! the *One* midst many was not found!
Stars indeed he saw, but not the Sun
All his longings sought and dwelt upon.

Weary now with all his wanderings vain,
To his native home he turns again;
There he finds a Fisher on the strand,
Stooping down to draw a net to land.

What new treasures of the deep are these?
Who this unknown Stranger of the seas?
Changed his aspect now, his bearing high,
While he speaks with gentle dignity:—

"Peace be with thee! Now thou mayest obtain
All so long desired and sought in vain,—
Thou mid many fools the only wise,
At thy journey's end behold the prize!"

"Yes, it is the One, beyond compare,
Sought so long, abandoned in despair!
Stranger, speak, how may it be my own?"
"*All thou hast* can be the price alone."

"Be it so!" he joyfully replied;
"Lord, take all, and take myself beside!
For in wondrous love Thou bring'st from heaven
What no monarch has or could have given."

And the world deceived and foolish call
Him, who for one jewel gave his all;

But unheeding what they think or say,
Glad and satisfied he goes his way.

Food is his which they have never known,
Cordials granted to himself alone;
From earth's vanities and cares set free,
Now he walks in peace and liberty.

Wondrous blessings reach him from above,
Love comes down to meet the heart of love;
Ever as he views his treasure bright,
All his soul is filled with life and light.

Blessed they who find the priceless gem,
Blessed they who seek! It shines for them
Brightly still, the prize by God revealed
For the victor on Faith's battle-field.

UNBEKANNTES. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

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October 9.

MILTON ON HIS BLINDNESS.

"Mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute."—Ps. cxli. 8.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide

Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
  My true account, lest He returning chide,—
"Doth God exact day labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask; but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
  Either man's work, or His own gifts; who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best; His state
Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,
  And post o'er land and ocean without rest,—
They also serve who only stand and wait."

JOHN MILTON.

October 10.

THE SMOKING FLAX AND BRUISED REED.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."—ISA. xlii. 3.

WHEN evening choirs the praises hymned
  In Zion's courts of old,
The high-priest walked his rounds, and trimmed
  The shining lamps of gold;
And if, perchance, some flame burned low,
  With fresh oil vainly drenched,
He cleansed it from its socket,—so
  The smoking flax was quenched.

But Thou who walkest, Priest Most High!
  Thy golden lamps among,

What things are weak and near to die
  Thou makest fresh and strong.
Thou breathest on the trembling spark,
  That else must soon expire,
And swift it shoots up through the dark,
  A brilliant spear of fire!

The shepherd that to stream and shade
  Withdrew his flock at noon,
On reedy stalk soft music made
  In many a pastoral tune;
And if, perchance, the reed were crushed,
  It could no more be used,—
Its mellow music marred and hushed,
  He broke it, when so bruised.

But Thou, Good Shepherd, who dost feed
  Thy flock in pastures green,
Thou dost not break the bruised reed,
  That sorely crushed hath been;—
The heart that dumb in anguish lies,
  Or yields but notes of woe,
Thou dost attune to harmonies
  More rich than angels know!

Lord, once my love was all ablaze,
  But now it burns so dim;
My life was praise, but now my days
  Make a poor broken hymn.

Yet ne'er by Thee am I forgot,
But helped in deepest need,—
The smoking flax Thou quenchest not,
Nor break'st the bruised reed.

W. B. ROBERTSON.

October 11.

CONFLICT.

"Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me."—Ps. cxliii. 9.

FIGHTING the battle of life!
With a weary heart and head;
For in the midst of the strife
The banners of joy are fled,—
Fled and gone out of sight,
When I thought they were so near!
And the voice of Hope, this night,
Is dying away on my ear.

Fighting alone to-night!
With not even a stander-by
To cheer me on in the fight,
Or to hear me when I cry.
Only the Lord can hear,—
Only the Lord can see
The struggle within, how dark and drear,
Though quiet the outside may be.

Fighting alone to-night!
  With what a sinking heart,—
Lord Jesus, in the fight
  Oh, stand not Thou apart!
Body and mind have tried
  To make the field my own;
But when the Lord is on my side,
  He doeth the work alone.

Lord, I would fain be still
  And quiet, behind my shield;
But make me to love Thy will,
  For fear I should ever yield.
Nothing but perfect trust,
  And love of Thy perfect will,
Can raise me out of the dust,
  And make my fears be still.

Even as now my hands,
  So doth my folded will
Lie waiting Thy commands,
  Without one anxious thrill;
But as with sudden pain
  My hands unfold and clasp,
So doth my will start up again
  And taketh its old firm grasp.
Lord, fix my eyes upon Thee,
  And fill my heart with Thy love!
And keep my soul, till the shadows flee,
  And the light breaks from above!—ANON.

October 12.

ABIDE WITH US.

"Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.... But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us."—Luke xxiv. 15, 16, 29.

LONG hast Thou sojourned with us, Lord,
Ere we Thy face did know;
Oh! still Thy fellowship afford
While dark the shadows grow!

For passed is many a beauteous field
Beside our morning road,
And many a fount to us is sealed,
That once so freshly flowed.

The splendour of the noontide lies
On other paths than ours;
The dews that fall from fragrant skies
Will not revive our flowers.

Stay with us, gracious Saviour, stay,
When friends and hopes depart!
Fainting, on Thee we wish to lay
The burden of our heart.

Abide with us, dear Lord! remain
Our Life, our Truth, our Way!
So shall our loss be turned to gain,
Night dawn to endless day.

H. N. Powers.

October 13.

RESOLUTION.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."
1 Tim. vi. 12.

I HAVE done at length with dreaming!
Henceforth, O thou soul of mine,
Thou must take up sword and gauntlet,
Waging warfare most divine.

Life is struggle, earnest victory!
Wherefore have I slumbered on,
With my forces all unmarshalled,
With my weapons all undrawn?

O how many a glorious record
Had the angels of me kept,
Had I done, instead of doubted,
Had I warred, instead of wept!

Yet, my soul, look not behind thee!
Thou hast work to do at last;
Let the brave toil of the present
Overarch the crumbled past!

Build thy great acts high and higher,
Build them on the conquered sod
Where thy weakness first fell bleeding,
And thy first prayer rose to God.

Anon.

October 14.

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND."

"The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night."—"My times are in thy hand."—Ps. cxxi. 5, 6; xxxi. 15.

SOVEREIGN Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise,
All my times are in Thy hand,
All events at Thy command.

Times of sickness, times of health,
Times of penury and wealth,
Times of trial and of grief,
Times of triumph and relief,

Times the tempter's power to prove,
Times to taste a Saviour's love,—
All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend.

Plagues and death around me fly,—
Till He wills I cannot die;
Not a single shaft shall hit
Till the God of love sees fit.

O Thou gracious, wise, and just!
In Thy hands my life I trust.
Have I something dearer still?
I resign it to Thy will.

May I always own Thy hand,
Still to the surrender stand,
Know that Thou art God alone,
I and mine are all Thine own.

Thee at all times will I bless;
Having Thee, I all possess.
How can I bereavèd be,
Since I cannot part from Thee?

Ryland.

* * *

October 15.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

"I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you......testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts xx. 20, 21.

THERE was a ship, one eve autumnal, onward
Steered o'er an ocean lake;
Steered by some strong hand ever as if sunward;—
Behind, an angry wake;
Before, there stretched a sea that grew intenser
With silver fire far spread,
Up to a hill mist-gloried, like a censer
With smoke encompassèd:
It seemed as if two seas met brink to brink,
A silver flood beyond a lake of ink.

There was a soul, that eve autumnal, sailing
Beyond the earth's dark bars,

Toward the land of sunsets never paling,
    Toward Heaven's sea of stars ;—
Behind, there was a wake of billows tossing ;
    Before, a glory lay,—
O happy soul ! with all sail set, just crossing
    Into the Far-away ;
The gleam and gloom, the calmness and the strife,
Were death behind thee, and before thee life.

And as that ship went up the waters stately,
    Upon her top-masts tall
I saw two sails, whereof the one was greatly
    Dark, as a funeral pall ;
But oh ! the next's pure whiteness who shall utter?
    Like a shell-snowy strand,
Or when a moonbeam falleth through a shutter
    On a dead baby's hand.
But both alike across the surging sea
Helped to the haven where the bark would be.

And as that soul went onward, sweetly speeding
    Unto its home and light,
Repentance made it sorrowful exceeding,
    Faith made it wondrous bright :
Repentance dark with shadowy recollections,
    And longings unsufficed ;
Faith white and pure with sunniest affections,
    Full from the face of Christ.
But both across the sun-besilvered tide
Helped to the haven where the heart would ride.

ALEXANDER.

October 16.

THE LAST SUNSET.

"Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."—Isa. lx. 20.

"Let me look once more on what my divine Father has diffused even here, as a faint intimation of what He has somewhere else. I am pleased with this, as a distant outskirt, as it were, of the Paradise towards which I am going."—John Foster.

CLOSE not the casement, love;
Nay, raise the curtain,—I would look once more
On the bright stream and autumn-tinted grove,
Our own blue lake and its dark mountain shore;

All we so long have known,—
And loved with that deep passion of the heart,
Which cannot be a thing of earth alone,
Which must of our immortal life be part.

Yes, I would gaze again,
At the old sunset hour, on earth and sky,
Though doubting not its image will remain,
One of the memories which can never die.

How brightly lingers still
That golden glory in the radiant west!
How its reflection glows, on wood and hill,
The rushing river, and the lake's calm breast!

I go to scenes more fair,
More glorious—yet to these affection clings;
First tokens here of what awaits us there,
Time's passing types of everlasting things.

I thank Thee, O my God,
My Father! for the goodness which has given
So much to beautify our brief abode,
Our pilgrim path as Thy redeemed to heaven.

And now Thy voice I hear;—
Thou callest, I obey,—well pleased I come,
Leaving the outer courts, so fair, so dear,
For higher joys within my Father's home!

H. L. L.

* * *

October 17.

HERE AND THERE.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

WHAT no human eye hath seen,
What no mortal ear hath heard,
What on thought hath never been
In its noblest flights conferred,—
This hath God prepared in store
For His people evermore!

When the shaded pilgrim land
  Fades before my closing eye,
Then revealed on either hand
  Heaven's own scenery shall lie;
Then the veil of flesh shall fall,
Now concealing, darkening all.

Heavenly landscapes, calmly bright,
  Life's pure river murmuring low,
Forms of loveliness and light,
  Lost to earth long time ago,—
Yes, mine own, lamented long,
Shine amid the angel-throng!

Many a joyful sight was given,
  Many a lovely vision here,
Hill, and vale, and starry even,
  Friendship's smile, Affection's tear,
These were shadows, sent in love,
Of realities above!

When upon my wearied ear
  Earth's last echoes faintly die,
Then shall angel-harps draw near,
  All the chorus of the sky;
Long-hushed voices blend again,
Sweetly, in that welcome-strain.

Here were sweet and varied tones,
  Bird, and breeze, and fountain's fall;

Yet Creation's travail-groans
  Ever sadly sighed through all.
There no discord jars the air,
Harmony is perfect there!

When this aching heart shall rest,
  All its busy pulses o'er,
From her mortal robes undrest
  Shall my spirit upward soar.
Then shall unimagined joy
All my thoughts and powers employ.

Here devotion's healing balm
  Often came to soothe my breast,
Hours of deep and holy calm,
  Earnests of eternal rest;
But the bliss was here unknown,
Which shall there be all my own!

Jesus reigns, the Life, the Sun,
  Of that wondrous world above:
All the clouds and storms are gone,
  All is light, and all is love;
All the shadows melt away
In the blaze of perfect day!

From the German of LANGE.

October 18.

"COME UNTO ME."

"And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And Jesus said, Come."—MATT. xiv. 28, 29.

AND dare *we* come, since he, the trusted saint,
 Who with one only shared the Lord's high love,
Shrank from the tossing gale, and scarce with faint
 And feeble cry toward the Saviour strove?
  Yes; we answer the dread call,
 Not fearless, but in duteous awe;
  He will stay the frail heart's fall,
 His arm will onward, upward draw.

O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?
 Spare not for Him to walk the midnight wave,
On the dim shore at morn to seek Him out,
 Work 'neath His eye, and near Him make thy grave.
  So backslidings past no more
 Shall in the heavens remembered be,
  Faith the three denials sore
 O'erpaying with confessions three.

Strange power of mighty Love! if heaven allow
 Choice, on the restless waters rather found
Meeting her Lord, with cross and bleeding brow,
 Than calmly waiting on the guarded ground!

Yearning ever to spring forth
And feel the cold waves for His sake ;—
All her giving of no worth,
Yet, till she give, her heart will ache.

KEBLE, "*Lyra Innocentium.*"

* * *

October 19.

CONSOLATION.

"Are the consolations of God small with thee?"—"God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace."—JOB xv. 11; 2 THESS. ii. 16.

ALL are not taken ; there are left behind
Living Belovèds, tender looks to bring,
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,
When "dust to dust" the love from life disjoined ;
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving,
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
Crying, "Where are ye, O my loved and loving?"
I know a Voice would sound, "Daughter, *I AM.*
Can I suffice for Heaven, and not for Earth?"

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

October 20.

THE CHILD OF JAMES MELVILLE.

(Born July 1586; died January 1588.)

"Jesus said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xix. 14.

ONE time my soul was pierced as with a sword,
Contending still with men untaught and wild;
When He who to the prophet lent his gourd,
Gave me the solace of a pleasant child!

A summer gift, my precious flower was given,
A very summer fragrance was its life;
Its clear eyes soothed me as the blue of heaven,
When home I turned, a weary man of strife……

A few short months it blossomed near my heart—
A few short months, else toilsome all and sad;
But that home-solace nerved me for my part,
And of the babe I was exceeding glad!

Alas! my pretty bud, scarce formed, was dying—
(The prophet's gourd it withered in a night!)
And He who gave me all, my heart's pulse trying,
Took gently home the child of my delight.

Not rudely culled, not suddenly it perished—
But gradual faded from our love away,
As if still, secret dews, its life that cherished,
Were drop by drop withheld, and day by day.

My gracious Master saved me from repining,
So tenderly He sued me for His own;
So beautiful He made my babe's declining,
Its dying blessed me as its birth had done!......

There were two milk-white doves my wife had nourished,
And I too loved erewhile, at times to stand,
Marking how each the other fondly cherished,
And fed them from my baby's dimpled hand.

So tame they grew, that to his cradle flying
Full oft they cooed him to his noontide rest;
And to the murmurs of his sleep replying,
Crept gently in, and nestled in his breast.

'Twas a fair sight—the snow-pale infant sleeping,
So fondly guardianed by these creatures mild;
Watch o'er his closèd eyes their bright eyes keeping—
Wondrous the love betwixt the birds and child!

Still as he sickened seemed the doves, too, dwining,
Forsook their food, and ceased their pretty play;
And on the day he died, with sad note pining,
One gentle bird would not be frayed away.

His mother found it when she rose, sad-hearted,
At early dawn, with sense of nearing ill;
And when at last the little spirit parted,
The dove died too—as if of its heart-chill!

The other flew to meet my sad home-riding,
As with a human sorrow in its coo;
To my dead child and its dead mate then guiding,
Most pitifully plained—and parted too!

'Twas my first "hansel" and "propine" to heaven;
And as I laid my darling 'neath the sod,
Precious His comforts—once an infant given,
And offered with two turtle-doves to God!

MRS. STUART MENTEITH.

* * *

October 21.

GOD'S THOUGHTS NOT AS OURS.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."—ISA. lv. 8.

I SAID, "The darkness shall content my soul!"
God said, "Let there be light."
I said, "The night shall see me reach my goal,"—
Instead came dawning bright.

I bared my head to meet the smiter's stroke;
There came sweet dropping oil.
I waited trembling, but the Voice that spoke
Said gently, "Cease thy toil."

I looked for evil, stern of face and pale;
Came good, too fair to tell.
I leaned on God when other joys did fail,—
He gave me these as well.

S. WILLIAMS.

October 22.

SABBATH HYMN FOR AN INVALID.

"When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise.... Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." —Ps. xlii. 4, 5.

THOUSANDS, O Lord of hosts, to day
Around Thine altars meet,
And tens of thousands throng to pay
Their homage at Thy feet.

They see Thy power and glory there,
As I have seen them too;
They hear, they read, they join in prayer,
As I was wont to do.

They sing Thy love, as I have sung,
In sweet and solemn lays;
Were I among them, my glad tongue
Would learn new songs of praise.

For Thou art in their midst, to teach,
When on Thy name they call;
And Thou hast blessings, Lord, for each,
Hast blessings, Lord, for all.

I, of such privilege bereft,
In spirit turn to Thee;—

Oh, hast Thou not a blessing left,
  A blessing, Lord, for *me?*

The dew lies thick on all the ground,—
  Shall my poor fleece be dry?
The manna falls from heaven around,—
  Must I of hunger die?

Behold Thy prisoner! loose my bands
  If 'tis Thy gracious will;
If not, contented in Thy hands,
  Behold Thy prisoner still!

I may not to Thy house repair,
  But here Thou surely art;
Then consecrate a house of prayer
  In my surrendered heart.

To Faith reveal the things unseen;
  To Hope the joys unfold;
Let Love, without a veil between,
  Thy glories now behold.

Oh, cause Thy face on me to shine,
  That doubt and fear may cease!
Lift up Thy countenance benign
  On me, and give me peace!

MONTGOMERY.

October 23.

FRIEND AND JUDGE.

"Seek him that turneth the shadow of death into the morning."
Amos v. 8.

COULD we meet Him as a Friend,
Jesus, our Lord, to-night?
Could we see the Judge descend
With awe, but not affright?
Could we say, "The wished-for day
Of meeting comes at last;
Now the troubles of the way,
And sin and grief, are past"?

Could we meet Him as a Friend?
Then wherefore should we fear,
If He come not, but should *send*
To call His children dear?
For He saith, to you, to me,
With Jordan's wave in view,
"Fear not, I shall be with thee
When thou art passing through."

Can we meet Him as a Friend,
Jesus, our Lord, to-night,
Should He come, or should He send,
With awe, but not affright?
Then we can say,—"The wished-for day
Of meeting comes at last,
When the troubles of the way,
And sin and grief, are past!"

S. L. F.

October 24.

IN THE VALLEY.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."—Ps. xxiii. 4.

WHEN day's shadows lengthen, Jesus, be Thou near;
Pardon, comfort, strengthen, chase away my fear;
Love and hope be deepened, faith more strong and clear.

When the night grows darkest, and the stars are pale,
When the foe assembles in Death's misty vale,
Be Thou sword and helmet, be Thou shield and mail.

* * * * *

Cold the waters rolling, chill the mists around,
Black the night above me, strange the untrodden ground,
Oft lost in the desert, yet may I be found.

By the Jordan's ripples, passing through the shade,
Let me hear that promise, once for ever made—
"It is I, thy Jesus; be not thou afraid."

So shall no fears chill me on that unknown shore,
For in death He conquered, and can die no more;
His Hand guards and guides me to the City's door.

Blessed warfare over, endless rest alone,
Tears no more, nor sorrow, neither sigh nor moan,
But a song of triumph round about the Throne!

F. G. Lee.

* * *

October 25.

UP–HILL.

"He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
Mark xiii. 13.

Does the road wind up-hill through all the way?
"Yes, to the very end."
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
"From morn to night, my friend."

But is there for the night a resting-place,
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin?
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
"You cannot miss that inn."

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
"Those who have gone before."
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
"They will not keep you standing at that door."

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
"Of labour you shall find the sum."
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
"Yea, beds for all who come."

Christina Rossetti.

October 26.

HYMN SUNG AT A FUNERAL.

"Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."—"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."—1 CHRON. xxix. 15; JOHN v. 28, 29.

AT THE HOUSE.

COME forth! come on, with solemn song!
The road is short, the rest is long!
The Lord brought here, He calls away,
Make no delay,—
This home was for a passing day.

Here in an inn a stranger dwelt;
Here joy and grief by turns he felt:
Poor dwelling, now we close thy door!
The task is o'er,
The sojourner returns no more!

Now of a lasting home possest,
He goes to seek a deeper rest.
Good night! the day was sultry here,
In toil and fear—
Good night! the night is cool and clear.

Chime on, ye bells! again begin,
And ring the Sabbath morning in;
The labourer's week-day work is done,
The rest begun,
Which Christ hath for His people won!

AT THE GRAVE.

Now open to us, gates of peace!
Here let the pilgrim's journey cease.
Ye quiet slumberers, make room
In your still home
For the new stranger who has come!

How many graves around us lie!
How many homes are in the sky!
Yes, for each saint doth Christ prepare
A place with care;—
Thy home is waiting, brother, there!

Jesus, Thou reignest, Lord alone!
Thou wilt return and claim Thine own.
Come quickly, Lord! return again!
Amen! Amen!
Thine seal us ever, now and then!

F. SACHSE. (*Tr.* H. L. L.)

* * *

October 27.

ACROSS THE RIVER.

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."
2 SAM. xiii. 23.

WHEN for me the silent oar
Parts the silent river,
And I stand upon the shore
Of the strange Forever,

Shall I miss the loved and known?
Shall I vainly seek mine own?

Mid the crowd that come to meet
  Spirits sin-forgiven,—
Listening to their echoing feet
  Down the streets of heaven—
Shall I know a footstep near
That I listen, wait for, here?

Then will one approach the brink
  With a hand extended,—
One whose thoughts I loved to think,
  Ere the veil was rended?—
Saying, "Welcome! we have died,
And again are side by side!"

Can the bonds which make us here
  Know ourselves immortal,
Drop away, like foliage sere,
  At Life's inner portal?—
What is holiest below
Must for ever live and grow.

I shall love the angels well,
  After I have found them,
In the mansions where they dwell,
  With the glory round them;
But at first, without surprise,
Let me look in human eyes!

He who on our earthly path
  Bids us help each other,
Who His Well-belovèd hath
  Made our Elder Brother,
Will but clasp the chain of love
Closer when we meet above.

Lucy Larcom.

* * *

October 28.

A CLOISTER LEGEND.

"Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done."—"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."—Ezra vii. 23; Luke xii. 43.

A MONK, to meditation given
  And holy communings with Heaven,
Had long and most devoutly prayed—
Feeling such boon his faith would aid—
That Heaven would unto him afford
An actual *vision* of the Lord.

At last his prayer was heard. One day
While in his lonely cell he lay,
Heavy of heart, because afraid
He had presumptuously prayed,
His cell flashed up with sudden light,
And showed to his astonished sight
A glorious Presence, who with smile
Most winning greeted him, and while

He shrunk abashed, said graciously,
"Why art thou troubled? It is *I!*"

But hark! there is the convent bell
Pealing the hour when from his cell
The monk must go to serve and bless
The sons and daughters of distress,
Who, every day at noontide, wait
For alms before the convent gate.
Untimely summons! shall he stay
To enjoy the vision, or obey
The call which bids him haste to glad
The poor with benison and bread?
He hesitates—he fain would stay,—
But conscience beckons him away,
Reminding him that unto men
Duty comes first, and pleasure then;
And so, though with a sad regret
And strong desire to linger yet,
He quits the Presence, and repairs
To where the poor await his cares.

This duty done, he seeks anew
His quiet cell; there to review,
In pensive thought, those glories bright
Which had a moment charmed his sight.—
He starts! for, marvellous to tell,
The Christ is still within his cell,
And not less glorious than before,
But glorious infinitely more!

With mingled awe and rapture gazed
The monk; yet in his heart amazed
That One whom he had seemed to slight,
Preferring to His Presence bright
A homely duty—thus should deign
To wait and gladden him again.
"Nay, wonder not," the Presence said,—
"Because thou wentest forth, I stayed;
Hadst thou remained to enjoy the sight,
I would have taken instant flight."

ANON.

* * *

October 29.

THE NEW DESIRE.

"Lord, all my desire is before thee."—"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him."—Ps. xxxviii. 9; cxlv. 19.

O GOD, my God! no longer I entreat
Nor sue as I have sued in times of yore,
That from eternal fulness Thou shouldst mete
Into my cup some earthly blessing more.
All things lie treasured in Thy bounteous store,
Nor lower source I seek than source divine;
Thou hast no less to give than heretofore,
But now a new desire, O Lord, is mine;—
It is to *lose desire*, and know no will but Thine.

L. N. R.

October 30.

THE PERFECT DAY.

"Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."—"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away."—Ps. xviii. 28; Song of Sol. ii. 17.

DARK is the sky that overhangs my soul,
The mists are thick that through the valley roll;
But as I tread, I cheer my heart, and say,
"When the day breaks the shadows flee away."

Unholy phantoms from the deep arise,
And gather through the gloom before mine eyes;
But all shall vanish at the dawning ray,—
When the day breaks the shadows flee away.

I bear the lamp my Master gave to me;
Burning and shining must it ever be;
And I must tend it till the night decay,
Till the day break, and shadows flee away.

He maketh all things good unto His own;
For them in every darkness light is sown:
He will make good the gloom of this my day,
Till that day break, and shadows flee away.

He will be near me in the awful hour
When the last foe shall come in blackest power,
And He will hear me when at last I pray,
"Let the day break, the shadows flee away!"

In Him, my God, my glory, I will trust;
Awake and sing, O dweller in the dust!
Who shall come, will come, and will not delay—
His day will break, these shadows flee away!

Rev. S. J. Stone.

* * *

October 31.

FROM "THE GRAVE BY THE LAKE."

"The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works."—"We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."—Ps. cxlv. 9; 1 John iv. 14.

O THE generations old
Over whom no church-bells tolled—
Christless, lifting up blind eyes
To the silence of the skies!
For the innumerable dead,
Is my soul disquieted!......

Then the warm sky stooped to make
Double sunset in the lake;
While above I saw with it
Range on range, the mountains lit;
And the calm and splendour stole
Like an answer to my soul.

Hear'st thou, O of little faith,
What to thee the mountain saith,

What is whispered by the trees?—
"Cast on God thy care for these;
Trust Him, if thy sight be dim;—
Doubt for them is doubt of Him."……

Still Thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach these souls in prison!
Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy Cross!
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that Cross could sound!

Therefore well may Nature keep
Equal faith with all who sleep,
Set her watch of hills around
Christian grave and heathen mound,
And to cairn and kirkyard send
Summer's flowery dividend.

Keep, O pleasant Melvin stream,
Thy sweet laugh in shade and gleam;
On the Indian's grassy tomb
Swing, O flowers, your bells of bloom!
Deep below, as high above,
Sweeps the circle of God's love.

WHITTIER.

November 1

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."—Rev. vii. 9.

FOR all the saints, who from their labours rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blest.
Hallelujah!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
Hallelujah!

O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win, with them, the victor's crown of gold!
Hallelujah!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Hallelujah!

And, when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph-song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Hallelujah !

The golden evening brightens in the west ;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest ;
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.
Hallelujah !

But, lo ! there breaks a yet more glorious day :
The saints triumphant rise in bright array ;
The King of Glory passes on His way.
Hallelujah !

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Hallelujah !

How.

* * *

November 2.

ALL SAINTS.

" Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."—James i. 27.

ONE feast, of holy days the crest,
I, though no churchman, love to keep ;

All Saints—the unknown good that rest
  In God's still memory folded deep.
The bravely dumb that did their deed,
  And scorned to blot it with a name,
Men of the plain heroic breed,
  That loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

Such lived not in the past alone,
  But thread to-day the unheeding street,
And stairs to Sin and Famine known
  Sing with the welcome of their feet;
The den they enter grows a shrine,
  The grimy sash an oriel burns,
Their cup of water warms like wine,
  Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brows to me appears
  An aureole traced in tenderest light,
The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears
  In dying eyes, by them made bright,
Of souls that shivered on the edge
  Of that chill ford repassed no more,
And in their mercy felt the pledge
  And sweetness of the farther shore.

LOWELL.

November 3.

RESURRECTION HOPE.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—PHIL. iii. 21.

RED o'er the forest peers the setting sun,
The line of yellow light dies fast away
That crowned the eastern copse; and chill and dun
Falls on the moor the brief November day.

Now the tired hunter winds a parting note,
And Echo bids good-night from every glade;
Yet wait awhile, and see the calm leaves float
Each to his rest beneath their parent shade.

How like decaying life they seem to glide!
And yet no second spring have they in store,
But where they fall, forgotten to abide,
Is all their portion, and they ask no more......

Man's portion is to die and rise again—
Yet he complains, while these unmurmuring part
With their sweet lives, as pure from sin and stain
As his when Eden held his virgin heart.

And haply half unblamed his murmuring voice
Might sound in Heaven, were all his second life
Only the first renewed—the heathen's choice,
A round of listless joy and weary strife......

Heavy and dull this frame of limbs and heart,
Whether slow creeping on cold earth, or borne
On lofty steed, or loftier prow, we dart
O'er wave or field : yet breezes laugh to scorn

Our puny speed, and birds, and clouds in heaven,
And fish, like living shafts that pierce the main,
And stars that shoot through freezing air at even—
Who but would follow, might he break his chain?

And thou shalt break it soon ; the grovelling worm
Shall find his wings, and soar as fast and free
As his transfigured Lord with lightning form
And snowy vest—such grace He won for thee,

When from the grave He sprang at dawn of morn,
And led through boundless air thy conquering road,
Leaving a glorious track, where saints, new-born,
Might fearless follow to their blest abode.

But first, by many a stern and fiery blast,
The world's rude furnace must thy blood refine ;
And many a gale of keenest woe be passed,
Till every pulse beat true to airs divine,

Till every limb obey the mounting soul,
The mounting soul, the call by Jesus given.
He who the stormy heart can so control,
The laggard body soon will waft to heaven.

KEBLE.

November 4.

NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE.

"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."—JOHN xvii. 24.

OURS is the grief, who still are left in this far wilderness,
Which will at times, now they are gone, seem blank and comfortless.
For moments spent with loving hearts are breezes from the hills,
And the balm of Christian brotherhood like Eden's dew distils;
And we whose footsteps and whose hearts so often fail and faint,
Seem ill to spare the cheering voice of one departed saint.

But oh, we sorrow not like those whom no bright hopes sustain,
For them who sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him again.
Love craves the presence and the sight of all its well-beloved,
And therefore weep we in the homes whence they are far removed;
Love craves the presence and the sight of each belovèd one,
And therefore Jesus spake the word which caught them to His throne,—

"Father, I will that all My own, whom Thou hast granted Me,
Be with Me where I am, to share My glory's bliss with Thee."

Thus heaven is gathering, one by one, in its capacious breast
All that is pure and permanent, and beautiful and blest;
The family is scattered yet, though one in home and heart,—
Part militant in earthly gloom, in heavenly glory part.
But who can speak the rapture when the circle is complete,
And all the children, sundered now, around One Father meet?
One fold, one Shepherd, one employ, one everlasting home;
"Lo, I come quickly." "Even so, Amen! Lord Jesus, come!"

BICKERSTETH.

* * *

November 5.

"HE GOETH BEFORE THEM."

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep....And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice."—JOHN x. 11, 4.

THE winds blow fierce across the barren wild;
The storm-clouds gather darkly on our way;
'Tis cold;—but oh, that loving Face and mild,
Which goes before! there first the shadows stay,

And tempests reach Him first, our Shepherd there:
What He endures shall we complain to bear?

The night comes on—'tis dark; the stars are dim,
  We cannot see the way;—but oh, that Form
Which goes before! the night comes first to Him,
  And darkness first is His, as was the storm.
Shall we shrink back, or tremble to go on,
Where He, our Shepherd, first for us has gone?

The stream is reached—the river dark and cold;
  The waves are high;—but oh, that mighty One
Who goes before! the billows o'er Him rolled;
  He crossed the waters first; and shall we shun
The final anguish which our Shepherd bore?
His hand shall guide us to the other shore!

He goes before! And so *we* may not look
  Backward at all, but forward evermore—
Keeping in sight the blessed path He took,
  Patient to meet each cross He meekly bore,
Trusting His wisdom in the darkest hour,
O'ercoming every trial through His power.

He goes before, a shield against the storm;
  A shadow in the noon-day, lights at night;
In danger's hour, there is the Shepherd's form
  But just beyond, though tears may dim our sight.
O earthly flock, fear not for evermore!
Where'er we walk, our Shepherd goes before.

J. H. T.

November 6.

EARLY RISING AND PRAYER.

"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."—Ps. v. 3.

WHEN first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
  To do the like; our bodies but forerun
The spirit's duty; true hearts spread and heave
  Unto their God as flowers do to the sun:
Give Him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

Yet never sleep the sun up; prayer should
  Dawn with the day; there are set lawful hours
'Twixt heaven and us: the manna was not good
  After sun-rising; for day sullies flowers......

Walk with thy fellow-creatures; note the hush
  And whisperings amongst them. Not a spring
Or leaf but hath his morning hymn,—each bush
  And oak doth know I AM. Canst *thou* not sing?
O leave thy cares and follies! go this way,
And thou art sure to prosper all the day.

Serve God before the world; let Him not go
  Until thou hast a blessing; then resign
The whole unto Him, and remember who
  Prevailed by wrestling ere the sun did shine......

When the world's up, and every swarm abroad,
  Keep well thy temper, mix not with each clay.
Despatch necessities ; life hath a load
  Which must be carried on, and safely may ;
Yet keep those cares without thee, let the heart
Be God's alone, and choose the better part.

VAUGHAN.

* * *

November 7.

THE WORTH OF HOURS.

"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."—"Walk in wisdom, redeeming the time."—COL. iii. 17 ; iv. 5.

BELIEVE not that your inner eye
  Can ever in just measure try
The worth of hours, as they pass by ;

For every man's weak self, alas !
Makes him to see them, while they pass,
As through a dim or tinted glass.

But if in earnest care you would
Mete out to each its part of good,
Trust rather to your after-mood......

If *then* a painful sense comes on
Of something wholly lost and gone,
Vainly enjoyed, or vainly done,—

Of something from your being's chain
Broke off, nor to be linked again
By all mere memory can retain,—

Upon your heart this truth may rise,
Nothing that altogether dies
Suffices man's just destinies.

So should we live, that every hour
May die as dies the natural flower,—
A self-reviving thing of power;

That every thought and every deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future meed;

Esteeming sorrow, whose employ
Is to develop, not destroy,
Far better than a barren joy.

R. Monckton Myles.

November 8.

THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

"From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."—"The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—Ps. xc. 2; James i. 17.

O LORD! my heart is sick,
Sick of this everlasting change;
And life runs tediously quick
Through its unresting race and varied range;—

Change finds no likeness to itself in Thee,
And wakes no echo in Thy mute eternity.

O Lord! my heart is sick
Of this perpetual lapsing time,
So slow in grief, in joy so quick,
Yet ever casting shadows so sublime.
Time, of all creatures, is least like to Thee,
And yet it is our share of Thine eternity.

Oh, change and time are storms
For lives so thin and frail as ours!
For change the work of grace deforms,
With love that soils, and help that overpowers;
And time is strong, and, like some chafing sea,
It seems to fret the shore of Thine eternity.

Weak, weak, for ever weak!
We cannot hold what we possess;
Youth cannot find, age will not seek,—
Oh, weakness is the heart's worst weariness!
But weakest hearts can lift their thoughts to Thee;
It makes us strong to think of Thine eternity.

Oh, Thou art very great,
To set Thyself so far above!
But we partake of Thine estate,
Established in Thy strength and in Thy love.
That love hath made eternal room for me
In the sweet vastness of its own eternity.

FABER.

November 9.

THE REST OF FAITH.

"When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"—"God only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved."—JOB xxxiv. 29; PS. lxii. 6.

WHEN winds are raging o'er the upper ocean,
  And billows wild contend with angry roar,
'Tis said, far down beneath the wild commotion,
  That perfect stillness reigneth evermore.

Far, far beneath, the noise of tempest dieth,
  And silver waves chime ever peacefully;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
  Disturbs the Sabbath of that deeper sea.

So, in the heart that knows Thy love, O Saviour,
  There is a temple, sacred evermore,
And all the tumult of life's angry voices
  Dies in hushed silence at its peaceful door.

Far, far away, the roar of passion dieth,
  And loving thoughts rise calm and peacefully;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
  Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, in Thee.

O rest of rests! O peace serene, eternal!
  Thou ever livest, and Thou changest never:
And in the secret of Thy presence dwelleth
  Fulness of joy, for ever and for ever!

MRS. H. B. STOWE.

November 10.

THE PULLEY.

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."—Job xxii. 21.

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
Let us, said He, pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
Rest at the bottom lay.

For if I should, said He,
Bestow *this* jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in nature, not the God of nature;
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

George Herbert.

November 11.

ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.

"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness."—"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee."—Ps. lxv. 11; xxxi. 19.

THOUGH flowers have perished at the touch
Of frost, the early comer,
I hail the season loved so much,—
The good St. Martin's summer……

The summer and the winter here
Midway a truce are holding,
A soft consenting atmosphere
Their tents of peace infolding.

The silent woods, the lonely hills,
Rise solemn in the gladness;
The quiet that the valley fills
Is scarcely joy or sadness.

How strange! the autumn yesterday
In winter's grasp seemed dying;
On whirling winds from skies of gray
The early snow was flying.

And now, while over Nature's mood
There steals a soft relenting,
I will not mar the present good
Forecasting or lamenting.

My autumn time and Nature's hold
  A dreamy tryst together;
And, both grown old, about us fold
  The golden-tissued weather……

O stream of life, whose swifter flow
  Is of the end forewarning,
Methinks thy sun-down afterglow
  Seems less of night than morning!

The mysteries of the untried days
  I close my eyes from reading;
His will be done, whose darkest ways
  To light and life are leading!

WHITTIER.

November 12.

REVIVAL.

"Though the root thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant."—"The hour is coming, when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."—JOB xiv. 8, 9; JOHN v. 28, 29.

DIE to thy root, sweet flower!
  If God so wills, die even to thy root;
Live there awhile an uncomplaining, mute,
Blank life, with darkness wrapped about thy head,
And fear not for the silence round thee spread.
This is no grave, though thou among the dead

Art counted, but the Hiding-place of Power.
Die to thy root, sweet flower!

Spring from thy root, sweet flower!
When so God wills, spring even from thy root;
Send through the earth's warm breast a quickened shoot,
Spread to the sunshine, spread unto the shower,
And lift unto the sunny air thy dower
Of bloom and odour. Life is on the plains,
And, in the woods, a sound of buds and rains
That sing together. Lo! the winter's cold
Is past, sweet scents revive, thick buds unfold;
Be thou, too, willing in the Day of Power,
Spring from thy root, sweet flower!

Dora Greenwell.

November 13.

NOVEMBER.

"Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter."—"We all do fade as a leaf."—Ps. lxxiv. 17; Isa. lxiv. 6.

THE autumn wind is moaning low, the requiem of the year;
The days are growing short again, the fields forlorn and sere;
The sunny sky is waxing dim, and chill the hazy air;
And tossing trees before the breeze are turning brown and bare.

All Nature and her children now prepare for rougher days:
The squirrel makes his winter-bed, and hazel hoard purveys;
The sunny swallow spreads his wings to seek a brighter sky;
And boding owl, with nightly howl, says cloud and storm are nigh.

No more 'tis sweet to walk abroad among the evening dews;—
The flowers have fled from every path with all their scents and hues;
The joyous bird no more is heard, save where his slender song
The robin drops, as meek he hops the withered leaves among.

Those withered leaves, that slender song, a solemn truth convey,
In wisdom's ear they speak aloud of frailty and decay;
They say that man's apportioned year shall have its winter too,
Shall rise and shine, and then decline, as all around him do.

And be it so. I know it well; myself, and all that's mine,
Must roll on with the rolling year, and ripen to decline.

I do not shun the solemn truth; to him it is not drear,
Whose hopes can rise above the skies and see a Saviour near.

It only makes him feel with joy this earth is not his home,
It sends him on from present ills to brighter hours to come,
It bids him take with thankful heart whate'er his God may send,—
Content to go, through weal or woe, to glory in the end.

Then murmur on, ye wintry winds, remind me of my doom;
Ye lengthened nights, still image forth the darkness of the tomb!
Eternal summer lights the heart where Jesus deigns to shine;
I mourn no loss, I shun no cross, so Thou, O Lord, art mine!

Anon.

* * *

November 14.

DEPENDENCE.

"My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me."—"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."—Ps. lxiii. 8; lxii. 5.

GIVE me Thy joy in sorrow, gracious Lord,
And sorrow's self shall like to joy appear!
Although the world should waver in its sphere

I tremble not, if Thou Thy peace afford.
But, Thou withdrawn, I am but as a chord
That vibrates to the pulse of hope and fear,
Nor rest I more than harps which to the air
Must answer, when we place their tuneful board
Against the blast,—which thrill unmeaning woe
Even in their sweetness. So no earthly wing
E'er sweeps me but to sadden. Oh, place Thou
My heart beyond the world's sad vibrating!
And where but in Thyself? Oh, circle me,
That I may feel no touches save of Thee!

C. H. Townshend.

* * *

November 15.

UNDER ORDERS.

"The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way."—Ps. xxv. 9.

We know not what is expedient,
But we may know what is right;
And we never need grope in darkness,
If we look to Heaven for light.

Down deep in the hold of the vessel
The ponderous engine lies,
And faithfully there the engineer
His labour steadily plies;

He knows not the course of the vessel,
He knows not the way he should go;

He attends to his simple duty,
And keeps the fire aglow.

He knows not whether the billows
The bark may overwhelm;
He knows and obeys the orders
Of the pilot at the helm.

And so, in the wearisome journey
Over life's troubled sea,
I know not the way I am going,
But Jesus shall pilot me.

I see not the rocks and the quicksands,
For my sight is dull and dim,
But I know that Christ is my Captain,
And I take my orders from Him.

Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth!
Speak peace to my anxious soul;
And help me to feel that all my ways
Are under Thy wise control;

That He who cares for the lily,
And heeds even the sparrow's fall,
Shall tenderly tend His loving child,
For He made and loveth all.

And so, when wearied and baffled,
I know not which way to go,
I know that the Lord can guide me,
And 'tis all that I need to know.

ANON. *From the "Christian Age."*

November 16.

ABIDE WITH ME.

"Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them."—Luke xxiv. 29.

ABIDE with me! fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word;
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me!

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile;
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee:
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me!

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness:
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Keep Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!

LYTE.

* * *

November 17.

COME HOME!

"The Lord is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—"Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"—"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion."—2 PETER iii. 9; EZEK. xxxiii. 11; LUKE xv. 20.

THE day is drawing nearly done,
Come home, children! come home!
The night-lamps shine out one by one,
Come home, children! come home!

The Elder Brother stands at the threshold of the door,
He holdeth out His loving hands. Come in for evermore!
Come home, children! come home!
For the darkness cometh quickly on, and the day is nearly o'er.

The streets are growing dark and cold,
Come home, children! come home!
White mists creep up o'er moor and wold,
Come home, children! come home!
But the Father's house streams out, with light and pleasant heat;
A loving welcome speaketh He, His little ones to greet.
Come home, children! come home!
The Elder Brother is so kind. Ah, children, home is sweet!

Ye must be tired of playtime now,
Come home, children! come home!
With tear-stained cheek and heated brow,
Come home, children! come home!
What mean ye, weary children, that ye should wail and weep?
The Father's arms are very strong His tender ones to keep!
Come home, children! come home!
Ye need no more to toil and strive; He gives His loved ones sleep.

The golden gates stand open fair,—
Come home, children! come home!
The Elder Brother taketh care,—
Come home, children! come home!
His name was called "Jesus" in the days that are gone past,
And we shall call Him Jesus while eternity shall last.
Come home, children! come home!
For the night-wind rises damp and cold, and the day is closing fast.

E. C. Clephane.

* * *

November 18.

"WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED, I WILL COMPLAIN."

"Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?"—Ps. cxix. 82.

"O LORD, how canst Thou say Thou lovest me?
Me whom Thou settest in a barren land,
Hungry and thirsty on the burning sand,
Hungry and thirsty where no waters be,
Nor shadows of date-bearing tree;—
O Lord, how canst Thou say Thou lovest me?"

"I came from Edom by as parched a track,
As rough a track beneath My bleeding feet—
I came from Edom seeking thee, and sweet
I counted bitterness; I turned not back,

But counted life as death, and trod
The winepress all alone: and I am God."

"Yet, Lord, how canst Thou say Thou lovest me?
For Thou art strong to comfort; and could I
But comfort one I love, who, like to die,
Lifts feeble hands and eyes that fail to see,
In one last prayer for comfort—nay,
I could not stand aside or turn away!"

"Alas! thou knowest that for thee I died,
For thee I thirsted with the dying thirst;
I, Blessed, for thy sake was counted cursed,
In sight of men and angels crucified.
All this and more I bore to prove
My love; and wilt thou yet mistrust My love?"

"Lord, I am fain to think Thou lovest me,
For Thou art all in all and I am Thine;
And, lo! Thy love is better than new wine,
And I am sick of love in loving Thee.
But dost Thou love me? speak and save,
For jealousy is cruel as the grave."

"Nay, if thy love is not an empty breath,
My love is as thine own, deep answers deep.
Peace, peace; I give to My belovèd sleep,
Not death but sleep, for love is strong as death.
Take patience; sweet thy sleep shall be,
Yea, thou shalt wake in Paradise with Me."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

November 19.

SISTER SORROW.

"Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."
John xvi. 2.

SISTER SORROW! sit beside me.
Or, if I must wander, guide me;
Let me take thy hand in mine—
Cold alike are mine and thine.

Think not, Sorrow, that I hate thee,—
Think not I am frightened at thee,—
Thou art come for some good end.
I will treat thee as a friend.

I will say that thou art bound
My unshielded soul to wound,
By some force without thy will,
And art tender-minded still……

That thy gentle tears have weight
Hardest hearts to penetrate;
That thy shadow brings together
Friends long lost in sunny weather.

Softly takest thou the crown
From my haughty temples down;
Place it on thine own pale brow;
Pleasure wears one,—why not thou?……

If thou goest, Sister Sorrow!
I shall look for thee to-morrow,—
I shall often see thee drest
As a masquerading guest.

And howe'er thou hid'st the name,
I shall know thee still the same
As thou sitt'st beside me now,
With my garland on thy brow.

LORD HOUGHTON.

* * *

November 20.

THE CHAMBER OF PEACE.

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—MATT. xxviii. 6.

THE sacred Chamber is still and wide;
You listen in vain for a breath;
And pale lie the sleepers, side by side,
In the cold moonlight of death.

No sighs are heard in the shadowy place,
No voices of them that weep;
They have fought the fight, and finished the race—
God giveth them rest in sleep......

And sweet is the Chamber, silent and wide,
Where lingers the holy smile
Of a wayfaring Man, who turned aside
To rest, long ago, for a while.

He had suffered a sorrow which none may tell,
He had purchased a Gift unpriced;
When His work was over, the moonlight fell
On the sleeping face of Christ—

The face of a Victor, dead and crowned,
With a smile divinely fair;
The saints and martyrs sleeping around
Were stirred as He entered there.

His very Name is as ointment poured
On the moonlight pale to-night;
And the Chamber is sweet to Thy servants, Lord,
For the scent of Thy raiment white.

The silent Chamber faceth the east,
Faceth the dawn of the day;
And the shining feet of our great High Priest
Shall break through the shadows gray.

The golden dawn of the Day of God
Shall smite on the sealèd eyes;
The trumpet's sound shall thunder around,
The dreamers shall wake and rise.

The night is over, the sleep is slept,
They are called from the shadowy place;
The pilgrims stand in the glorious land,
And gaze on the Master's face.

B. M.

November 21.

HOW DOTH DEATH SPEAK OF OUR BELOVED?

"And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."—ACTS viii. 2.

HOW doth Death speak of our belovèd
When it has laid them low,
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lip and brow?

It clothes their every gift and grace
With radiance from the holiest place,
With light as from an angel's face;

Recalling with resistless force,
And tracing to their hidden source,
Deeds scarcely noticed in their course,—

This little, loving, fond device,
That daily act of sacrifice,
Of which too late we learn the price!

Opening our weeping eyes to trace
Simple, unnoticed kindnesses,
Forgotten notes of tenderness……

It sweeps their faults with heavy hand,
As sweeps the sea the trampled sand,
Till scarce the faintest print is scanned.

It shows how such a vexing deed
Was but a generous nature's weed,
Or some choice virtue run to seed;

How that small fretting fretfulness
Was but love's over-anxiousness,
Which had not been had love been less;

This failing at which we repined
But the dim shade of day declined,
Which should have made us doubly kind.

Thus doth Death speak of our belovèd
  When it has laid them low.
Then let Love antedate the work of Death,
  And do this now!

How doth Death speak of our belovèd
  When it has laid them low,
When it has set its hallowing touch
  On speechless lip and brow?

It takes each failing on our part
And brands it in upon the heart
With caustic power and cruel art.

The small neglect which may have pained,
A giant stature will have gained
When it can never be explained;

The little service which had proved
How tenderly we watched and loved,
And those mute lips to glad smiles moved ;—

The little gift from out our store,
Which might have cheered some cheerless hour,
When they with earth's poor needs were poor,—
But never will be needed more !

It shows our faults like fires at night ;
It sweeps their failings out of sight ;
It clothes their good in heavenly light.

O Christ, our life ! foredate the work of Death,
  And do this now !
Thou who art Love, thus hallow our beloved !
  Not Death, but Thou !

Mrs. Charles.

* * *

November 22.

THE MOURNER'S TEXT.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job i. 21.

'TWAS the Lord gave ; the Lord hath taken away,—
  So, at the grave, I stand, and strive to say ;
Yielding, O God, though with reluctant groan,
  Thy right to take Thine own.

'Twas the Lord's gift;—I muse on sunny years,—
My heart I lift with thanks amid my tears;
Lord, Thou conferr'dst on me beyond my share
Of good, and dear, and fair!

'Twas the Lord took;—hence I have pledge most sure
Again to look on smile so sweet and pure;
Thou tak'st not to destroy, but to restore,
More bright, and loved still more.

So, as it hoards together joys and woes,
The text affords, O Lord, the fitting close.
I say,—and turn to leave the hallowed sod—
"Bless'd be the name of God!"

LORD KINLOCH.

* * *

November 23.

OUR ADVERSARIES.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."—EPH. vi. 11.

CHRISTIAN! dost thou hear them?
On the holy ground,
How the troops of Midian
Prowl and prowl around?
Christian! up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss;
Smite them by the merit
Of the holy Cross!

Christian! dost thou feel them?
How they work within,
Tempting, luring, urging,
Goading on to sin?
Christian! never fear them!
Never be downcast!
Smite them by the merit
Of Christ's Lenten fast.

Christian! dost thou hear them?
How they speak thee fair?
"Always fast and vigil?
Always watch and prayer?"
Christian! answer boldly,—
"While I breathe, I pray!"
Peace shall follow battle,
Night shall end in day.

"Well I know thy troubles,
O My servant true,
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too.
But that toil shall make thee
Some day all Mine own;
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near My throne."

NEALE.
From the Latin.

November 24.

FALLEN IN THE NIGHT.

"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."
Ps. xci. 16.

IT dressed itself in green leaves all the summer long,
Was full of chattering starlings, loud with throstles' song;
Children played beneath it, lovers sat and talked,
Solitary strollers looked up as they walked.
Oh, so fresh its branches! and its old trunk gray
Was so stately rooted, who forebode decay?
Even when winds had blown it yellow, almost bare,
Softly dropped its chestnuts through the misty air;
Still its few leaves rustled with a faint delight,
And their tender colours charmed the sense of sight,
Filled the soul with beauty, and the heart with peace,
Like sweet sounds departing—sweetest when they cease.

Pelting, undermining, loosening, came the rain;
Through its topmost branches roared the hurricane;
Oft it strained and shivered till the night wore past,
But in dusky daylight there the tree stood fast—
Though its birds had left it, and its leaves were dead,
And its blossoms faded, and its fruit all shed.

Ay, and when last sunset came a wanderer by,
Watched it as aforetime with a musing eye,
Still it wore its scant robes so pathetic gay,
Caught the sun's last glimmer, the new moon's first ray,

And majestic, patient, stood, amidst its peers,
Waiting for the spring-times of uncounted years.

But the worm was busy, and the days were run;
Of its many sunsets this was the last one;
So in quiet midnight, with no eye to see,
None to smite in falling, fell the noble tree!

Says the early labourer, starting at the sight
With a sleepy wonder, "Fallen in the night!"
Says the schoolboy, leaping in a wild delight
Over trunk and branches, "Fallen in the night!"

O thou tree, thou glory of His hand who made
Nothing ever vainly, thou hast Him obeyed!
Lived thy life, and fallen when and how He willed;—
Be all lamentation and all murmurs stilled.
To our last hour live *we*—fruitful, brave, upright;
'Twill be a good ending, "Fallen in the night!"

DORA GREENWELL.

* * *

November 25.

HOME LOVE.

"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go."—GEN. xxiv. 58.

THY ways are wonderful, Maker of men!
Thou gavest me a child, and I have fed
And clothed and loved her, many a growing year;
Lo! now a friend of months draws gently near,

And claims her future—all beyond his ken—
There he hath never loved her, nor hath led:
She weeps and moans, but turns, and leaves her
home so dear.

She leaves, but not forsakes. Oft in the night,
Oft at mid-day when all is still around,
Sudden will rise, in dim pathetic light,
Some childish memory of household bliss,
Or sorrow by love's service robed and crowned;
Rich in his love, she yet will sometimes miss
The mother's folding arms, the mother's sealing kiss.

Then first, I think, our eldest-born, although
Loving, devoted, tender, watchful, dear,
The innermost of home-bred love shall know!
Yea, when at last the janitor draws near,
A still, pale joy will through the darkness go,
At thought of lying in those arms again,
Which once were heaven enough for any pain.

By love doth love grow mighty in its love:
Once thou shalt love us, child, as we love thee.
Father of love, is it not Thy decree
That, by our long, far-wandering remove
From Thee, our life, our home, our being blest,
We learn at last to love Thee true and best,
And rush with all our loves back to Thy infinite
rest?

GEORGE MACDONALD.

November 26.

MY BIRTHDAY.

IN OLD AGE.

"Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth...Forsake me not when my strength faileth."—Ps. lxxi. 5, 9.

BENEATH the moonlight and the snow
  Lies dead my latest year;
The winter winds are wailing low
  Its dirges in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind,
  As if a loss befell;
Before me, even as behind,
  God is, and all is well.

His light shines on me from above,
  His low voice speaks within—
The patience of immortal Love
  Out-wearying mortal sin.

Not mindless of the growing years,
  Of care and loss and pain,
My eyes are wet with thankful tears
  For blessings that remain.

The years no charm from Nature take:
  As sweet her voices call,

As beautiful her mornings break,
  As sweet her evenings fall.

Love watches o'er my quiet ways,
  Kind voices speak my name,
And lips that find it hard to praise,
  Are slow, at least, to blame.

How softly ebb the tides of will!
  How fields, once lost or won,
Now lie behind me green and still
  Beneath a level sun!......

Let winds that blow from heaven refresh,
  Dear Lord, the languid air;
And let the weakness of the flesh
  Thy strength of spirit share.

And, if the eye must fail of light,
  The ear forget to hear,
Make clearer still the spirit's sight,
  More fine the inward ear!

Be near me in mine hours of need,
  To soothe, or cheer, or warn,
And down these slopes of sunset lead
  As up the hills of morn!

WHITTIER.

November 27.

JESUS ONLY.

"And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus...And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."—MARK ix. 4, 7, 8.

THE vision fades away,—
The brilliant radiance from heaven is [gone;
The angel visitants no longer stay,
Silent the Voice—Jesus is found alone.

In strange and sad amaze
The three disciples watch, with longings vain,
While the cloud-chariot floats beyond their gaze;
Yes, these must go—He only will remain.

"Oh, linger, leave us not,
Celestial brothers! heaven has seemed so near
While ye were with us—earth was all forgot!"
See, they have vanished; He alone is here.

"He only,—He, our own,
Our loving Lord, is ever at our side,
What though the messengers of heaven are gone!
Let all depart, if He may still abide!"

Such surely was their thought
Who stood beside Him on that wondrous eve.
So would *we* feel ;—Saviour, forsake us not,
When those unutterably dear must leave !

For all their priceless love,
All the deep joy their presence could impart,
Foretaste together of the bliss above,
We thank Thee, Lord, though with a breaking heart !

Nor murmur we to-day
That He who gave should claim His own again ;
Long from their native heaven they could not stay,
The servants go,—the Master will remain.

Jesus is found alone—
Enough for blessedness in earth or heaven !
Yet to our weakness hath His love made known,
More than Himself shall in the end be given.

" Not lost, but gone before,"
Are our belovèd ones ; the faithful Word
Tells of a meeting-place to part no more ;
" So shall *we* be for ever with the Lord ! "

H. L. L.

November 28.

WINTER THOUGHTS.

"I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."
—1 THESS. iv. 13.

BY the fireside we were sitting, Alice, golden-haired, and I,
While the short November gloaming hid a dark and sullen sky.
Sweetest time for happy fancies! but for me, alas! to-night
Hope can weave no fairy visions in the glowing embers' light;
For my thoughts still sadly linger o'er the dying winter day,
And the mournful wind still sobbing for the summer passed away
Only seems the faintest echo of my heart's deep wail of pain
For the hopes which ne'er shall waken, though the spring will come again.

Oh, the agony of parting! weary nights of hopes and fears!
Now to *us* a life-long sorrow—God has wiped away *their* tears.
"Ah, my happy, little Alice! yet for you no shadows rise,
Pleasant thoughts I see reflected, by the fire-light, in your eyes.

Are you dreaming of the spring-time, when larks sing
and violets blow?"
"Nay," with upturned face she answered; "I am
thinking of *the snow.*"

Simple words of childish prattle, heaven-sent and not in
vain;
For they fell upon my spirit like the sweet sleep after
pain.
Earth I see all white and radiant, e'en in winter drear
and cold,
Glittering in her bridal garments,—hill and valley, tree
and wold,
Busy street and quiet churchyard, where the angels all
the night,
Soft as fondest mother's fingers, spread the snowy
covering white,
And all Nature seems to whisper, as she basks in
heaven's own smile,
The glad word of cheering promise—"Only for a little
while."

But our hearts are ever failing; they are weak, so weak,
O Lord!
And we cannot rest in quiet, trusting only to Thy
word.
For the winter-time is dreary, and our hearts make
bitter moan;
One by one our dear ones leave us, till we are all alone;

And, alas! Faith's lamp burns dimly in our darkness and our fears,
And we cannot trace Thy footsteps for our own fast-falling tears.

But the longest night soon passes, and one morning we shall rise,
With the light of Resurrection dazzling our poor earth-blind eyes.
Oh, the rapture of that moment! strife all over, victory won,
Rest for toil, and bliss for sorrow, sin and care for ever done!—
Hush, we may not dare to enter; Christ is there, 'tis all we know;
And we trust our own shall greet us, clad in raiment white as snow.

E. *From "Family Treasury."*

* * *

November 29.

"MASTER, WHERE DWELLEST THOU?"

"Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see.…One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."—JOHN i. 38–40.

MASTER, dear Master, throned on high!
Our hearts still ask Thee now,
As did the two, in days gone by,
"Master, where dwellest Thou?"

Where, what is heaven? Silent we stand,
Our wisest cannot teach;—
Where is that happy, far-off land,
No mariner may reach?

North-west nor south-west passage brings
More near our heart's desire,—
Through no electric cord there rings
One note from angel choir.

From Paul, transported there to take
One glimpse, we're only given
Mysterious words, that seem to make
A trinity of heaven.

Master, where dwellest Thou? Oh, may
Mine the old answer be!
The day wanes, let me hear Thee say,
Dear Master,—"Come and see!"

S. L. F.

* * *

November 30.

THE SEA OF GALILEE.

"Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."—MARK i. 16, 17.

FISHERS of men! who would not rather stay,
Content to win the waters' glittering spoil,

Careless to ply the labours of the day,
  Careless to sleep the dreamless sleep of toil,
Till, toil and slumber ended, by his grave
Shall plash unheard the long familiar wave?

Fishers of men! what perilous seas ye dare!
  What hidden treachery of shoal and rock!
What toil of adverse winds, what dull despair
  Of stagnant calms! what dread of tempest shock!
What pain of wasted night and fruitless day!
How wild the waters, and how fierce the prey!

Yet go! ye bear your Master o'er the deep,—
  Shall they who carry such a Cæsar fear?
Go, for He watches, though He seem to sleep,
  And when ye think Him distant, He is near;
Ready, through blackest night and loudest storm
To show the radiant Presence of His form.

* * * * *

Not this your triumph, that the future brings
  Days when the Pontiff Fisherman shall shine
In Cæsar's purple, and on necks of kings
  Shall plant the foot of lordship: more divine
The kingdom that ye fight for; it shall win
Spirits and souls of men, and rule within.

This is thy lesson, Lake of Galilee!
  Not from the seats of Empire—lordly Nile,
Tiber, or proud Euphrates—but from thee,
  Fair lake, that knowest but to frown or smile

As skies are calm or angry, springs the Power
That rules the world till Time's appointed hour.

The towers of stone shall crumble, and the wall
Lie level as the plain : thy sea and sky
Change not, O Lake ! while empires rise and fall ;
Types of the changeless faith that shall not die,
Though all things human fail it, till the Son
See in a world restored the Eternal Purpose won.

ALFRED J. CHURCH.

December 1.

THE REVERIE.

PART I.

"Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."—Col. ii. 5.

OH that in unfettered union,
  Spirit could with spirit blend!
Oh that in unseen communion,
  Thought could hold the distant friend!
Who the secret can unravel
  Of the body's mystic guest?
Who knows how the soul may travel
  While unconsciously we rest?

* * * *

Has a strange mysterious feeling,
  Something shapeless, undefined,
O'er thy lonely musings stealing,
  Ne'er impressed thy pensive mind,
As if he, whose strong resemblance
  Fancy in that moment drew,

By coincident remembrance
  Knew your thoughts, and thought of you?

When, at mercy's footstool bending,
  Thou hast felt a secret glow;
Faith and hope to heaven ascending,
  Love still lingering below;—
Say, has ne'er the thought impressed thee
  That thy friend might feel thy prayer?
Or, the wish at least possessed thee
  He could then thy feeling share?

Who can tell? that fervent blessing,
  Angels, did you hear it rise?
Do you thus, your love expressing,
  Watch o'er human sympathies?
Do ye some mysterious token
  To the kindred bosom bear,
And to what the heart has spoken,
  Wake a chord responsive there?

Laws, perhaps unknown, but certain,
  Kindred spirits may control;
But what hand can lift the curtain,
  And reveal the awful soul?
Dimly through life's vapours seeing,
  Who but longs for light to break?
Oh this feverish dream of being!
  When, my friend, shall we awake?

Yes, the hour, the hour is hasting,
Spirit shall with spirit blend,
Fast mortality is wasting,
Then the secret all shall end.
Let, then, thought hold sweet communion,
Let us breathe the mutual prayer,
Till in heaven's eternal union,
O my friend, to meet thee there!

CONDER.

* * *

December 2.

THE REVERIE.

PART II.

"Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."—LUKE xxiii. 43.

OH! the hour when this material
Shall have vanished like a cloud!
When, amid the wide ethereal,
All the invisible shall crowd;
And the naked soul, surrounded
With innumerous hosts of light,
Triumph in the view unbounded,
And adore the Infinite!

In that sudden, strange transition,
By what new and finer sense
Shall she grasp the mighty vision
And receive its influence?

Angels! guard the new immortal
  Through the wonder-teeming space,
To the everlasting portal,
  To the spirit's resting-place.

Will she there no fond emotion,
  Naught of earthly love retain?
Or, absorbed in pure devotion,
  Will no mortal trace remain?
Can the grave those ties dissever
  With the very heart-strings twined?
Must she part, and part for ever,
  With the friend she leaves behind?

No, the past she still remembers;
  Faith and hope surviving too,
Ever watch those sleeping embers
  Which must rise and live anew:
For the widowed lonely spirit
  Mourns, till she is clothed afresh,
Longs perfection to inherit,
  And to triumph in the flesh.

Angels, let the ransomed stranger
  In your tender care be blest,
Hoping, trusting, free from danger
  Till the trumpet end her rest.
Till the call which shakes creation
  Through the circling heaven shall roll,
Till the day of consummation,
  Till the bridal of the soul.

Can I trust a fellow-being?
  Can I trust an angel's care?
O Thou merciful All-seeing,
  Beam around my spirit there!
Jesus, blessed Mediator,
  Thou the airy path hast trod!
Thou, the Judge, the Consummator,
  Shepherd of the fold of God!

Blessed fold! no foe can enter,
  And no friend departeth thence;
Jesus is their Sun, their Centre,
  And their shield Omnipotence.
Blessed! for the Lamb shall feed them,
  All their tears shall wipe away,
To the living fountains lead them
  Till fruition's perfect day.

Lo! it comes, that day of wonder,
  Louder chorals shake the skies;
Hades' gates are burst asunder,
  See the new-clothed myriads rise!
Thought, repress thy weak endeavour,—
  Here must reason prostrate fall;
Oh! the ineffable For Ever,
  And the Eternal All in All!

CONDER.

December 3.

NEAREST AND DEAREST.

"It is good for me to draw near to God."—Ps. lxxiii. 28.

IT was the Sabbath's blessed evening hour,
And the dusk stillness of the fire-lit room
Fell on the spirit with a soothing power,
A spell of holy calm unmixed with gloom.
The fire-light flickered upon steadfast eyes,
Brows where the Prince of Peace His seal had set,
And tremulous lips, where echoes of the skies,
Most eloquent in silence, lingered yet.

At length the musing of one heart found way:
"Oh, it is bliss," she said, "to join the throng
That fills God's temple on His holy day,
With the full harmony of sacred song!
Surely the soul draws nearest to Him *there*,
And bows with holiest awe before His throne;
Surely the highest bliss of faith and prayer
Is found within those sacred courts alone!"

"Nay," said another, "not alone. Our Lord
Dwells not in temples made with hands: He fills
The lone heights of the everlasting hills,
And dwells with all who tremble at His word.
And I have felt His blessed presence more,
And owned with holier awe its hallowing sway,

On the lone hill-side, or the wave-washed shore,
Than even in His house of prayer to-day."

Then spake a third: "O friends, full well I know
The joys ye speak of; but one dearer far
Comes to me often, in the ceaseless flow
Of week-day cares, amid earth's din and jar,
When for a moment's breathing-time I pause,
Saying, 'O Master, bless!'—and, lo! the while
He stands beside me, and my spirit draws
A heaven of rest and gladness from His smile!"

She ceased; and then one answered yet again:
"Yea, it is *always* bliss to feel Him near,
In crowd, or solitude, or sacred fane;
But never is His presence half so dear
As when the storms of sorrow o'er us meet,
And we, with bleeding heart and baffled will,
'Faint, yet pursuing,' struggle to His feet,
And lay our souls before Him, and are still."

Then all were silent; and my heart said, Yea,
Thou hast well spoken, thou dost well to prize
Higher than any bliss beneath the skies
The faith that clings and trusts Him though He slay!
This is the one note, in the song of praise
Rolling from all creation round the throne,
That only human hearts, sore tried, can raise,
And even they in this brief life alone.

A.

December 4.

ALONE.

"Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."—"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs...and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Ps. lxxxviii. 18; Isa. xxxv. 10.

I'VE been to the familiar places,
  The dear, old ways;
But there were no familiar faces
  That met my gaze,—
The green woods were too lonely,—
I, there alone,—I, only.

I climbed among the mountain ridges,
  Beyond the town,
And on its crowded streets and bridges,
  Looked sadly down.
The mountain was too lonely,—
I stood alone,—I, only.

But, looking up, not down, Faith traces
  A City fair,
And sees the dear, familiar faces
  That gather there;
None stand deserted, lonely,
Yet still my own,—mine only.

And, strange! while gazing on that City
  New life is found,—

My heart is filled with yearning pity
  For men around.
I must not enter lonely,
Nor bring just one,—one, only.

I will go forth, to sinners telling
  That Christ has come,—
I will go forth, by love compelling
  The wanderers home;
Pointing the lost and lonely
To Christ alone,—Christ only!

S. L. F.

* * *

December 5.

"TRUST IN HIM AT ALL TIMES."

"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us."—Ps. lxii. 8.

THOU didst trust Him long ago,
  Sin-burdened, weary, poor;
Doth He less pitying grow?
  Doth He *now* close the door,
  Who, opening before,
  Said, "Mine for evermore"?
    Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

Thou didst cast on Him a load
  Which He alone could bear;

And He, the Son of God,
Who shed for thee His blood,
Said, "Cast on Me *thy care;*
For on My heart I wear
Thy name, whose guilt I bare;
My all with thee I share,
My peace on thee bestow."
Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

Thou hast trusted Him for *all*,
Placed all within His hand;
Is this thy grief too small
For Him to understand
Who marks the sparrow's fall?
Heir of the King of kings,
Heir of immortal things,
Wouldst thou on eagle's wings
Mount nearer to the throne?
Oh, take to Him alone
All that each hour brings;
Stoop not to murmurings!
Doth not thy Father know,
Who all thy past hath known?
Shall care o'ercloud *thy* brow?
To roll away the stone
Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

Thou hast trusted Him for death,
Canst thou not trust for life?

Believing what He saith—
"Not pain, nor sword, nor strife,
Nor height, nor depth beneath,
Distress that earth can know,
Or power of hell below,
Shall separate from Me
Him whom I ever see
Covered, O Son, in Thee!"
Canst thou not trust Him *now?*

ELLIOTT.

* * *

December 6.

"IT REMAINETH."

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that they that weep be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not."—"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."—1 COR. vii. 29, 30; HEB. iv. 9.

"IT remaineth! it remaineth!"
Was sounding in mine ear,
With many a dirge-like cadence
Of the departing year......
A shadow mid earth's sunshine,
A glory mid her gloom,
To every heart a blessing
That gives the lesson room.

"It remaineth! it remaineth!"
Wouldst know what now remains?

That earthly joys are passing,
  And passing earthly pains,—
Yea, as a dream are passing,
  To leave no trace behind,
On saintly brow no shadow,
  No stain on saintly mind!

For thee, a pilgrim stranger,
  Remaineth only this—
To lightly bear earth's sadness,
  And lightly hold her bliss;
To be as one that waiteth
  And watcheth for the Lord;
So may'st thou at His coming
  Receive a full reward.

"It remaineth! it remaineth!"
  Wouldst know what *then* remains?
The glory and the gladness,—
  Love's everlasting gains!
All that was worth the prizing,
  Most precious and most pure,
All that the true heart treasures,
  For ever to endure!

The time is short! He cometh,
  Whose love hath set thy task,—
A crown of life His guerdon!
  What other wouldst thou ask?

But let thy consolation
In toil and vigil be,
There remaineth, there remaineth
A Sabbath rest for thee!

Songs of Christian Chivalry.

* * *

December 7.

ORDINATION HYMN.

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."—2 Tim. ii. 1.

CHRIST to the young man said, "Yet one thing more;
If thou wouldst perfect be,
Sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor,
And come and follow Me!"

Within this temple Christ again, unseen,
Those sacred words has said,
And His invisible hands to-day have been
Laid on a young man's head.

And evermore beside him on his way
The unseen Christ shall move,
That he may lean upon His arm, and say,
"Dost Thou, dear Lord, approve?"

Beside him at the marriage-feast shall be,
To make the scene more fair;

Beside him in the dark Gethsemane
Of pain and midnight prayer.

O holy trust! O endless sense of rest!
Like the belovèd John
To lay his head upon the Saviour's breast,
And thus to journey on!

LONGFELLOW.

* * *

December 8.

FAME.

"Whose praise is not of men, but of God."—"Whose names are in the book of life."—ROM. ii. 29; PHIL. iv. 3.

"WHAT shall I do lest life in silence pass?"—
And if it do,
And never prompt the bray of noisy brass,
Why shouldst thou rue?
Remember aye, the ocean depths are mute,
The shallows roar;
Worth is the ocean—fame is bruit
Along the shore.

"What shall I do to be for ever known?"—
Thy duty ever.
"This did full many who now sleep unknown."—
Oh, never, never!
Think'st thou perchance that they remain unknown
Whom *thou* knowest not?
By angel-trumps in heaven their praise is blown—
Divine their lot.

ANON.

December 9.

"TROUBLE NOT THE MASTER."

"Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master."—Luke viii. 49.

"DEAD is thy daughter, trouble not the Master"—
Thus in the ruler's ear his servants spake,
While tremblingly he urged the Saviour faster
Up the green slope from that white-margined lake.

The soft wave weltered, and the breeze came sighing
Out of the oleander thickets red;
He only heard a breath that gasped in dying,
Or, "Trouble not the Master; she is dead."

Trouble Him not. Ah, are these words beseeming
The desolation of that awful day,
When love's vain fancies, hope's delusive dreaming
Are over,—and the life has fled for aye?

We need Him most when the dear eyes are closing,
When on the cheek the shadow lieth strong,
When the soft lines are set in that reposing
That never mother cradled with a song.

Then most we need the Voice that, while it weepeth,
Yet hath a solemn undertone that saith,—
"Weep not, thy darling is not dead, but sleepeth;
Only believe, for I have conquered death."

* * * * *

Then most we need the thought of resurrection;—
Not the life here, mid pain, and sin, and woe,

But ever in the fulness of perfection
  To walk with Him in robes as white as snow.

* * * * *

Did He not enter in when that cold sleeper
  Lay still, with pulseless heart and leaden eyes;
Put calmly forth each loud tumultuous weeper,
  And take her by the hand, and bid her rise?

Come to us, Saviour! in our lone dejection;
  Speak calmly to our wild and passionate grief,
Bring us the hopes and thoughts of resurrection,
  Bring us the comfort of a true belief.

Come! with that human voice that breaks in weeping;
  Come! with that awful tenderness divine;
Come! tell us that they are not dead, but sleeping,
  But gone before to Thee, for they are Thine.

C. E. Alexander.

December 10.

REST IN THE LORD.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."—Ps. xxxvii. 7.

LIFE'S mystery—deep, restless as the ocean—
  Hath surged and wailed for ages to and fro;
Earth's generations watch its ceaseless motion,
  As in and out its hollow moanings flow.
Shivering and yearning by that unknown sea,
Let my soul calm itself, O God! in Thee.

Life's sorrows, with inexorable power,
Sweep desolation o'er this mortal plain,
And human loves and hopes fly as the chaff
Borne by the whirlwind from the ripened grain.
Oh, when before that blast my hopes all flee,
Let my soul calm itself, O Christ! in Thee.

Between the mysteries of death and life
Thou standest, loving, guiding, not explaining:
We ask, and Thou art silent; yet we gaze,
And our charmed hearts forget their drear complaining.
No crushing fate, no stony destiny,
O "Lamb that hath been slain!" we find in Thee.

The many waves of thought, the mighty tides,
The ground-swell that rolls up from other lands,
From far-off worlds, from dim, eternal shores,
Whose echo dashes o'er life's wave-worn strands,
This vague, dark tumult of the inner sea
Grows calm, grows bright, O risen Lord! in Thee.

Thy piercèd Hand guides the mysterious wheels;
Thy thorn-crowned brow now wears the crown of power;
And when the dark enigma presseth sore,
Thy patient Voice saith, "Watch with Me one hour."
As sinks the moaning river in the sea,
In silent peace, so sinks my soul in Thee!

MRS. H. B. STOWE.

December 11.

THE HOME-CALL.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—"Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."—Ps. cxvi. 15; 1 Thess. v. 9, 10.

JUST when Thou wilt, O Master, call!
Or at the noon, or evening fall,
Or in the dark, or in the light,
Just when Thou wilt,—it must be right.

Just when Thou wilt, O Saviour, come,
Take me to dwell in Thy bright home!
Or when the snows have crowned my head,
Or ere it hath one silver thread.

Just when Thou wilt, O Bridegroom, say,
"Rise up, My love, and come away!"
Open to me Thy golden gate,
Just when Thou wilt, or soon, or late.

Just when Thou wilt—Thy time is best,—
Thou shalt appoint my hour of rest,
Marked by the Sun of perfect love,
Shining unchangeably above.

Just when Thou wilt! no choice for me!
Life is a gift to use for Thee;
Death is a hushed and glorious tryst
With Thee, my King, my Saviour, Christ!

F. R. Havergal.

December 12.

AT LAST.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."—John xiv. 2.

WHEN on the day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces
I hear far voices out of darkness calling [blown,
My feet to paths unknown,—

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when the walls decay!
O Love divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be with me when all else from me is drifting,
Earth, sky, home-pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, O Father! let Thy Spirit
Be with me, then, to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm, I merit,
No street of shining gold.

Suffice it if, my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace,
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place;

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,

And flows for ever through heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find, at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

WHITTIER.

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December 13.

COMFORT FOR THE AGED CHRISTIAN.

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."—ISA. xlvi. 4.

WEEP not, although the beautiful decay
Within thy heart, as daily in thine eyes;
Thy heart must have its autumn, its pale skies,
Leading, mayhap, to winter's dim dismay.
Yet doubt not. Beauty doth not pass away;
Her form departs not, though her body dies;
Secure beneath the earth the snowdrop lies,
Waiting the spring's young resurrection day,
Through the kind nurture of the winter cold.
Nor seek thou by vain effort to revive
The summer time, when roses were alive:
Do thou thy work—be willing to be old;
Thy sorrow is the husk that doth infold
A gorgeous June, for which thou need'st not strive.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

December 14.

FAREWELL OF THE SOUL TO THE BODY.

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle."
2 PETER i. 14.

COMPANION dear! the hour draws nigh,
The sentence speeds,—*to die! to die!*
So long in mystic union held,
So close in strong embrace compelled,
How canst thou bear the dread decree
That strikes thy clasping nerves from me?
To Him, who on this mortal shore
The same encircling vestment wore,
To Him I look, to Him I bend,
To Him thy shuddering frame commend.

If ever I have caused thee pain,—
The throbbing heart, the burning brain,—
With cares and vigils turned thee pale,
Or scorned thee when thy strength did fail,—
Forgive! forgive!—thy task doth cease;
Friend, lover, let us part in peace.

That thou didst sometimes clog my course,
Or with thy trifling check my force,
Or lure from heaven my wavering trust,
Or bow my drooping wing to dust,
I blame thee not; our strife is done;
I know thou wert the weaker one,

The vase of earth, the trembling clod,
Constrained to hold the breath of God.

Well hast thou in my service wrought :
Thy brow hath mirrored forth my thought,
To wear my smile thy lip hath glowed,
Thy tear to speak my sorrows flowed ;
Thine ear hath brought me rich supplies
Of varying tissued melodies ;
Thy hands my prompted deeds have done,
Thy feet upon mine errands run ;—
Yes, thou hast marked my bidding well,
Faithful and true ! farewell, farewell !

Go to thy rest. A quiet bed
Meek Mother Earth with flowers shall spread,
Where I no more thy sleep may break
With fevered dream, nor rudely wake
Thy weary eye. Ah ! quit thy hold,
For thou art faint, and chill, and cold;
And still thy grasp and groan of pain
Do bind me, pitying, in thy chain,
Though angels warn me hence to soar
Where I can share thy woes no more.

Yet shall we meet. To soothe my pain,
Remember, *we shall meet again.*
Quell with this hope the victor's sting,
And keep it as a signet-ring……
Guard thou this hope to light thy gloom,
Till the last trumpet rends the tomb.

Then shalt thou glorious rise and fair,
Nor spot, nor shade, nor wrinkle bear;
And I, with hovering wing elate,
The bursting of thy bonds will wait,
And hail thee "Welcome to the sky,
No more to part, no more to die,—
Co-heir of immortality."

Mrs. Sigourney.

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December 15.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

"Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily." —Ps. lxxxvi. 1, 3.

THE faith, how small,
O Lord, with which I tread the way!
Give, at my call,
Faith that, from day to day,
Is fed by Christ alway.
I shall not fall,
But prove the promise blest;
"We which believe *do* enter into rest."

The prayer, how weak,
O Lord! that lifts my heart to Thee!
But this I seek,
This one thing give to me,—
Help my infirmity;
Within me speak,

And by the Spirit taught
I shall know what to pray for as I ought.

From pain and care,
O Lord, I ask not to be free;
But this my prayer—
Open my eyes to see
That Thou art guiding me.
Then I can bear
To walk in darkness still,
Walking with Thee, submissive to Thy will.

Clouds come and go,
But clouds will only make more bright
The after-glow!
After the darkest night
Will come the morning light;
And well I know
The morn itself may hide
Its face, but light shall be at eventide.

Home is more near,
O Lord! by every passing day;
Home is more dear
By every prayer I pray—
By every footstep of the way
That brings me there.
Where Thou art, let me be,
For where Thou art is home and heaven to me!

Anon.

December 16.

"FAINT, YET PURSUING."

"They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way...Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." —Ps. cvii. 4–6.

ON a long journey, to a place of rest,
What time the sun was sinking in the west,
Two travellers, with willing steps, drew nigh.
I watched them as they came. One, faltering, sank,
Silent and trembling, on the grassy bank,
With quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye.

The other stood, and calmly gazed around,
As one well pleased that such a rest was found,
Yet unexhausted by the lengthened way.
I questioned of the journey ;—*he* could tell
Of many a cooling shade and roadside well,
And kind companions through the toilsome day.

I asked the other. To his burning brow
He raised his hand, and said, "Ask me not now !—
To-morrow I may dare to look behind !"
And yet I knew, from the same village home,
Far in the distant valleys, both had come ;—
Whence the strange difference they seemed to find ?

Ah ! one had travelled a familiar road,
By many a fellow-pilgrim often trod,
Where hope led on, and love beside him smiled ;

The other took a lonely mountain way,
Haunt of the brigand and the beasts of prey,
Path of the avalanche and torrent wild.

Through the thick mist strange forms had glided past—
Strange voices whispered in the midnight blast,
New, nameless fears had thrilled his heart and brain.
Now he was safe ! and yet that journey drear,
With its dark memories of doubt and fear,
His spirit trembled to recall again.

And looking, listening, I musing thought,
By strangely varied paths how souls are brought
To the one resting-place in Christ our Lord !
And when at length the weary pilgrims stand
Safe in the shelter of the heavenly land,
What varied tales the angels will record !

Some in green pastures by still waters led,
On bread of life by faithful pastors fed,
Or early, gently called to rest and home ;—
On the dark mountains others wandering long,
Through doubts, and fears, and foes, a countless throng;
"Faint, yet pursuing," sad and worn, they come.

Ye who in sunshine tread the easy road,
Speak forth the praises of your Saviour God,
Tell of His mercy, magnify His love !
But pray for those who on the heights afar
Through storm and gloom watch for one rising star,
One ray of hope and guidance from above.

Yes, pray for them! *He* knows their conflicts well,
On whom the horror of great darkness fell,
  Till even the Father's face it seemed to hide;—
Pray that for them His pleading may prevail,
That of their hope one anchor may not fail,
  One stronghold—"We shall live, for Thou hast died!"

Then shall ye meet at last, where heaven's pure light
Shall seem to these the dearer and more bright
  For all the darkness that had gone before.
O Saviour, guide us! *How* we ask Thee not:
Even as Thou wilt—all grief shall be forgot,
  When safely landed on that peaceful shore!

H. L. L.

(*Suggested by a Sermon by Dr. Raleigh.*)

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December 17.

"TAKE HEART OF GRACE."

"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."—"The Lord will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed."—Ps. xxvii. 14; Deut. xxxi. 8.

O THOU who, tossing on life's troubled ocean,
  Mournest the hidings of thy Father's face,
And comfortless, amid the wild commotion,
  Seekest in vain some quiet resting-place,—
  Thou weary, fainting soul, "take heart of grace."……

Not all the fiercest tempests round thee blowing
  Can drive thee far from heaven's sweet resting-place;
Not all the floods thy sorrowing soul o'erflowing,
  Can long avail to hide from thee My face;
  Therefore, O downcast soul, "take heart of grace."

Oh, waste no more thy breath in weak complaining;
  Doubts throw aside; no longer thus disgrace
My faithful love, that leading, guiding, training,
  Perfects thee thus for My own dwelling-place;
  Therefore, thou faithless one, "take heart of grace."

Hast thou not seen how, for some precious treasure,
  Men beat of purest gold a goodly case?
Or cut for fragrant odours, at their pleasure,
  Out of rough stone, a rare and polished vase?
  O thou short-sighted one, "take heart of grace."

Like them, when for Myself I am preparing,
  Out of the soul, a fit abiding-place,
I hew thee, beat thee, till I see thee bearing
  My image, and My perfect likeness trace;
  Therefore, thou chosen one, "take heart of grace."

Oh, then, be of good courage! for I love thee;
  Gladly and cheerfully each cross embrace,
And bear it manfully; for soon above thee
  Light from My throne each cloud away shall chase;
  Therefore, afflicted one, "take heart of grace."

And soon, life's sorest trials past for ever,
  Faultless before thy and My Father's face,
I will present thee joyfully; and never
  Need say to thee, in that safe resting-place,
"O weary, fainting soul, take heart of grace!"

For every hour of that blest life immortal,
  Thou shalt be glad My guiding hand to trace,
That made thee meet by trials, through the portal
  To enter in, and rest in My embrace.
  Therefore, look upward, and "take heart of grace."

H. N. C.

* * *

December 18.

SAFE IN PORT.

"Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. So it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."—ACTS xxvii. 44.

SAFE home! safe home in port! Rent cordage, shattered deck,
Torn sails, provisions short, and only not a wreck;—
    But oh! the joy upon the shore
    To tell our voyage-perils o'er!

The prize! the prize secure! The wrestler nearly fell;
Bore all he could endure, and bore not always well!
    But he may smile at troubles gone
    Who sets the victor-garland on!

No more the foe can harm; no more of leaguered camp,
The cry of night-alarm, and need of ready lamp.
And yet how nearly had we failed,—
How nearly had the foe prevailed!

The lamb is in the fold, in perfect safety penned:
The lion once had hold, and thought to make an end;
But One came by with wounded side,
And for the sheep the Shepherd died.

The exile is at home!—O nights and days of tears,
O longings not to roam, O sins and doubts and fears!
What matter now?—In heavenly day
The King has wiped all tears away!

Hymn of the Greek Church.
(*Tr.* NEALE.)

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December 19.

AFTER A DEATH.

"The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me."—JOB iii. 25.

THE grief that was delayed so long,
O Lord, hath come at last.
Blest be Thy name for present pain
And for the weary past!

Yet, Father! I have looked so long
Upon the coming grief,

That what should grieve my heart the most
  Seems almost like relief.

To fear is harder than to weep,
  To watch than to endure;
The hardest of all griefs to bear
  Is a grief that is not sure.

I grew more unprepared for grief
  Which had so long been stayed;
The blow seemed more impossible
  The more it was delayed.

Yes, the most sudden of our griefs
  Are those which travel slow;
The longer warning that it gives
  The deeper is the woe.

The griefs we have to bear alone,
  The griefs that we can share,
Our single griefs, our crowded griefs—
  Which are the worst to bear?

Dear Lord! in all our loneliest pains
  Thou hast the largest share,
And that which is unbearable
  'Tis Thine, not ours, to bear.

How merciful Thine anger is,
  How tender it can be!
How wonderful all sorrows are
  Which come direct from Thee!—**Faber.**

December 20.

THE FATHER'S PROMISES.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises."—2 PETER i. 2, 4.

NEVER thought of care can come,
Throwing shadows o'er my home,
But God's Word lights up the way
With a more than noontide's ray;
And I read, in letters golden,
Many a promise, strong and olden;—
"Fear not, sparrows never fall
But your Father knoweth all;
He who gives them daily food,
Satisfies His own with good."

Never comes an hour of pain,
But, for sorrows that remain,
Comes a healing word to me
Of a land beyond the sea,
Where afflictions that are grievous,
At the very shore shall leave us,
And we all, by death made strong,
Shall be jubilant with song;
And I find fresh patience brought
To my spirit by the thought.

When I stand with timid feet
Where the uncertain pathways meet,

And in shadows of the night
Cannot guess which road is right,—
When I shrink in hesitation
From new scenes of desolation,
Comes the strengthening word to me,
"Lo, I always am with thee."
And while songs my lips employ
I go on my course with joy.

When the duties of the day
Roughly steal my strength away,
When the tasks I have to do
Are not easy, are not few,—
Then to make my courage stronger,
And my hope to last the longer,
Comes the Master with His grace,
With the shining of His face;
And I gladly do my best
Till He sends the hour of rest.

So, whate'er the lot may be
That my Father sends to me,
Never am I comfortless
With His word to aid and bless.
And while He His help is bringing
I will cheer the way with singing,
Till by His unchanging love
I shall reach His home above,
And while bending at His feet
Find the promises complete.—FARNINGHAM.

December 21.

"IS IT SO, O CHRIST IN HEAVEN?"

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."—JOHN xvi. 12.

IS it so, O Christ in heaven! that the highest suffer most?
That the strongest wander furthest, and more hopelessly are lost?
That the mark of rank in nature is capacity of pain,
And the anguish of the singer makes the sweetness of the strain?—
"I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Is it so, O Christ in heaven! that whichever way we go
Walls of darkness must surround us, things we would but cannot know?
That the Infinite must bound us, as a temple veil unrent,
While the Finite ever wearies, so that none attain content?—
"I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Is it so, O Christ in heaven! that the fulness yet to come
Is so glorious and so perfect, that to know would strike us dumb?

That if, only for a moment, we could pierce beyond the sky
With these poor, dim eyes of mortals, we should just see God and die?—
"I have many things to show you, but ye cannot bear them now."

SARAH WILLIAMS.

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December 22.

"WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?"

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."—JAMES v. 8.

WHAT of the night, O watchman? is the watching nearly done?
Is there not a streak of glory from the rising of the sun?
Dost thou see no fiery chariot on the far-off mountain crest?
Doth He tarry in His coming? oh, we weary for His rest!

Look out again, O watchman! for the Lord may yet be near,
While our eyes are dim with straining, and our ears too dull to hear.
We would fain go out to meet Him, as the bird flies to its nest;
Is He coming? is He coming? We are wearying for the rest!

We have told to one another of our home above the skies,
Till our spirits fail with longing, and the tears are in our eyes.

Oh, to see the King among us in His robes of glory drest!
Is He coming, weary watchman? We are longing for the rest!

We are weary in the pleasure-paths we thought so fair at first,
We are weary of the bitter streams that cannot quench our thirst;
We are fain for sweet companionship among the happy blest,—
But He tarrieth in His coming, and we weary for the rest!

O my soul, go forth to meet Him! tell Him, though the light is dim,
That our lamps are always burning, and we wait and long for Him!
Oh to sit beneath His shadow, all our wants and sins confest!
Blessed Jesus, art Thou coming? We are weary for the rest!

E. C. Clephane.

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December 23.

THE EVE OF DEPARTURE.

"The time of my departure is at hand."—2 Tim. iv. 6.

I LONG to flee away, and be at rest!
This world is but a lodging at the best;

It is not home, and home can never be,
For it is far, too far, O Lord, from Thee!
It seemed but twilight in the broadest day,
And now—its light is fading quite away.

I long to be at home! to see Thy face
In the "eternal leisure" of that place,
Where none of these distracting sights and sounds,
None of the misery that here abounds,
Can ever come;—O holy, blessed life!
How different from all these scenes of strife!

I long to be at home! Why need I stay,
An exile from that home, another day?
Perhaps, I need not! But God only knows
What the untraversed morrow may disclose.
Perhaps I may be safe at home, to-morrow,
With Christ,—far, far away from sin and sorrow!

* * * *

Can it be true? May I so soon be there?
So very soon? O Holy One, prepare
My sinful soul to meet Thee face to face
In Paradise! O strange, mysterious place!
Where is it? near? or very far away?
Shall I be there, "with Christ" this very day?

I do not fear the landing on the shore—
Christ will be there, and I shall fear no more;
But sometimes—for the flesh is weak—I shrink
When of the intervening waves I think.

The passage may be rough, and who can say
What perils may await me on the way?

And I must go alone! Most near and dear,
I cannot hope to have thee with me here!
I know that thou wilt watch me to the last,
Till all sweet ministries of love be past,
And we shall not be separated long,—
But "Love is strong as Death," and Death is strong.

Lord Jesus, take away this lingering dread!
For Thou art He that livest and wast dead,
And now Thou art alive for evermore,
That Death's long reign of terror may be o'er.
Increase my faith, that I may learn to cry,
"Thanks be to God, who giveth victory!"

From "Heart to Heart."

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December 24.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—LUKE ii. 13, 14.

IT chanced upon the merry, merry Christmas-eve,
I went sighing past the church across the moorland dreary—
"Oh! never sin and want and woe this earth will leave,
And the bells but mock the wailing sound, they sing so cheery.

How long, O Lord! how long before Thou come again?
Still in cellar, and in garret, and on moorland dreary,
The orphans moan, and widows weep, and poor men toil in vain,
Till earth is sick of hope deferred, though Christmas bells be cheery."

Then arose a joyous clamour from the wild-fowl on the mere,
Beneath the stars, across the snow, like clear bells ringing,
And a voice within cried—"Listen! Christmas carols even here!
Though thou be dumb, yet o'er their work the stars and snows are singing.
Blind! I live, I love, I reign; and all the nations through
With the thunder of My judgments even now are ringing,
Do thou fulfil thy work but as yon wild-fowl do,
Thou wilt heed no less the wailing, yet hear through it angels singing."

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

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December 25.

HIS NAME.

"Unto us a child is born:...and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."—ISA. ix. 6.

O WONDERFUL! round whose birth-hour
Prophetic song, miraculous power,
Cluster and hum, like star and flower,

Those marvellous rays that at Thy will,
From the closed heaven which is so chill,
So passionless, streamed round Thee still,

Are but as broken gleams that start,
O Light of lights, from Thy deep heart;
Thyself, Thyself, the Wonder art!

O Counsellor! four thousand years,
One question, tremulous with tears,
One awful question, vexed our peers.

They asked the vault, but no one spoke;
They asked the depth, no answer woke;
They asked their hearts, that only broke.

They looked, and sometimes on the height
Far off, they saw a haze of white,
That was a storm, but looked like light.

The secret of the years is read;
The enigma of the quick and dead
By the Child-voice interpreted.

O Everlasting Father, God!
Sun after sun went down, and trod
Race after race the green earth's sod,

Till generations seemed to be
But dead waves of an endless sea,
But dead leaves from a deathless tree.

But Thou hast come, and now we know
Each wave hath an eternal flow,
Each leaf a lifetime after snow.

O Prince of Peace! crowned, yet discrowned,—
They say no war nor battle's sound
Was heard the tirèd world around,

They say the hour that Thou didst come,
The trumpet's voice was stricken dumb,
And no one beat the battle-drum……

And still, as clouding questions swarm
Around our hearts, and dimly form
Their problems of the mist and storm,—

And still as ages fleet, but fraught
With syllables, wherein is wrought
The fulness of the Eternal thought,—

And when not yet in God's sunshine
The smoke drifts from the embattled line
Of warring hearts, that would be Thine,

We bid our doubts and passions cease,
Our restless fears be stilled with these—
"Counsellor, Father, Prince of Peace!"

REV. W. ALEXANDER.

December 26.

FUNERAL ANTHEM.

"There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest."—JOB iii. 17.

BROTHER, thou hast gone before us, and thy saintly soul is flown
Where tears are wiped from every eye, and sorrow is unknown;
From the burden of the flesh, and from care and fear released,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

The toilsome way thou'st travelled o'er, and borne the heavy load,
But Christ hath taught thy languid feet to reach His blest abode;
Thou art sleeping now, like Lazarus upon his father's breast,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Sin can never taint thee now, nor doubt thy faith assail,
Nor thy meek trust in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit fail;
And thou art sure to meet the good, whom on earth thou lovedst best,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!" the solemn priest hath said,
So we lay the turf above thee now, and we seal thy narrow bed;
But thy spirit, brother, soars away, among the faithful blest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

And when the Lord shall summon us, whom thou hast left behind,
May we, untainted by the world, as sure a welcome find;
May each, like thee, depart in peace, to be a glorious guest
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

MILMAN.

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December 27.

"LORD, WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO?"

"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following....Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?"—JOHN xxi. 20, 21.

"LORD, and what shall this man do?"
Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend?
If his love for Christ be true,
Christ hath told thee of his end:
This is he whom God approves,
This is he whom Jesus loves.

Ask not of him more than this,
  Leave it in his Saviour's breast,
Whether, early called to bliss,
  He in youth shall find his rest,
Or armèd in his station wait
Till his Lord be at the gate;

Whether in his lonely course
  (Lonely, not forlorn) he stay,
Or with Love's supporting force
  Cheat the toil and cheer the way:
Leave it all in His high hand,
Who doth hearts as streams command.

Gales from heaven, if so He will,
  Sweeter melodies can wake
On the lonely mountain rill
  Than the meeting waters make.
Who hath the Father and the Son,
May be left, but not alone.

Sick or healthful, slave or free,
  Wealthy, or despised and poor—
What is that to him or thee,
  So his love to Christ endure?
When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?

Only, since our souls will shrink
  At the touch of natural grief,

When our earthly loved ones sink,
Lend us, Lord, Thy sure relief;
Patient hearts, their pain to see,
And Thy grace, to follow Thee.

Keble.

December 28.

THE HEAVENLY SONG.

"And I heard a voice from heaven...the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne."—Rev. xiv. 2, 3.

HAPPY the company that's gone
From cross to crown, from thrall to throne;—
How loud they sing upon that shore
To which they sailed in heart before!

"Death from all death has set us free,
And will our gain for ever be;
Death loosed the massy chain of woe,
To let the mournful captives go.

"Death is to us a sweet repose,—
The bud was oped to show the rose;
The cage was broke to let us fly,
And build our happy nest on high.

"Earth was to us a seat of war,
On thrones of triumph now we are;
We longed to see our Jesus dear,
And sought Him there, but find Him here. ......

"This, this does bliss enough afford,
We are for ever with the Lord;
We want no more, for all is given,
His Presence is the heart of heaven!"

While thus I laid my listening ear
Close to the door of heaven to hear;
And then the sacred page did view,
Which told me all I heard was true,

Yet showed me that the heavenly song
Surpasses every mortal tongue,
With such unutterable strains
As none in fettering flesh attains,—

Then said I—"O to mount away,
And leave this clog of heavy clay!
Let wings of time more swiftly fly,
That I may join the songs on high!"

Ralph Erskine.

December 29.

EBENEZER.

"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."—1 Sam. vii. 12.

THUS far the Lord hath led us on,—in darkness and in day,
Through all the varied stages of the narrow homeward way;—

Long since, He took that journey, He trod that path
alone;
Its trials and its dangers full well Himself hath known.

Thus far the Lord hath led us,—the promise has not
failed;
The enemy encountered oft has never quite prevailed;
The shield of faith has turned aside or quenched each
fiery dart,
The Spirit's sword, in weakest hands, has forced him to
depart.

Thus far the Lord hath led us,—the waters have been
high,
But yet in passing through them we felt that He was nigh.
A "very present Helper" in trouble we have found;
His comforts most abounded when our sorrows did
abound.

Thus far the Lord hath led us,—our need has been
supplied,
And mercy has encompassed us about on every side;
Still falls the daily manna, the pure rock-fountains flow,
And many flowers of Love and Hope along the way-
side grow.

Thus far the Lord hath led us,—and will He *now* forsake
The feeble ones whom for His own it pleasèd Him to take?
Oh, never, never! earthly friends may cold and faith-
less prove,
But His is changeless pity, and everlasting love!

Calmly we look behind us, on joys and sorrows past,—
We know that all is mercy now, and shall be well at last.
Calmly we look before us—we fear no future ill;
Enough for safety and for peace, if *Thou* art with us still.

Yes, "they that know Thy name, O Lord, shall put their trust in Thee,"
While nothing in themselves but sin and helplessness they see.
The race Thou hast appointed us, with patience we can run;
Thou wilt perform unto the end the work Thou hast begun.

H. L. L.

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December 30.

IMMANUEL'S LAND.

"The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it....There shall be no night there."—Rev. xxi. 23-25.

THE sands of time are sinking;
The dawn of heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn, awakes.
Dark, dark hath been the midnight;
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

O Christ! He is the fountain,
 The deep, sweet well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,
 More deep I'll drink above;
There to an ocean fulness
 His mercy doth expand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
  In Immanuel's land.

With mercy and with judgment
 My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
 Were lustred by His love;
I'll bless the hand that guided,
 I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth,
  In Immanuel's land.

O I am my Belovèd's,
 And my Belovèd's mine!
He brings a poor vile sinner
 Into His house of wine;
I stand upon His merit—
 I know no other stand,
Not even where glory dwelleth,
  In Immanuel's land.

The bride eyes not her garment,
 But her dear bridegroom's face;

I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace,—
Not at the crown He gifteth,
But on His piercèd hand:
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land!

I've wrestled on towards heaven,
'Gainst storm and wind and tide;
Now, like a weary traveller
That leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening,
While sinks life's lingering sand,
I hail the glory dawning
From Immanuel's land!

A. R. Cousin.

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December 31.

"GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND OUR STRENGTH."

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations... For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."—Ps. xc. 1, 4.

O GOD, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone—
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come!
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home!

ISAAC WATTS.

Highland [illegible]
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